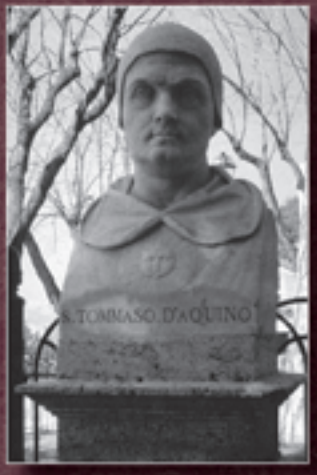
RALPH McINERNY

praeambula fidei

THOMISM AND THE GOD OF THE PHILOSOPHERS



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For Thomas DeKoninck

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PREFACE

In *Characters in Search of Their Author*,[1] I considered the difficulties posed for natural theology by various developments in recent philosophy. By and large, philosophers have become professionally hostile to the possibility of proving the existence of God and consequently of saying other true things about him. This hostility seems a predictable consequence of the subjective turn taken with Descartes and the various other turns taken since.[2] In the present volume, by contrast with its predecessor, I propose to treat the negative attitude toward natural theology that is found among those one would have expected to be defenders of it.

This book is a defense of a robust understanding of the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas and of the Magisterium on *praeambula fidei*. It is a critique of several influential thinkers whose writings have, however unwittingly, eroded the notion of *praeambula fidei*. Finally, it is an oblique defense of Thomism as philosophy. The locus of the *praeambula fidei* is in metaphysics as Thomas learned that culminating science from Aristotle. It is only when that metaphysics is correctly understood that the *praeambula fidei* can be correctly understood. Thomas added much to our understanding of these matters, but what he added to is what is found in Book Lambda of the *Metaphysics* and the presuppositions on which it depends. Thomists who imagine an enmity between Thomas and Aristotle fail to see this, and accordingly would lead us along paths that end in something akin to fideism.

1. *Characters in Search of Their Author, the Gifford Lectures Glasgow 1999-2000* (South Bend, Ind., 2001).

2. Cornelio Fabro's magisterial *Introduzione al ateismo moderno* (Rome, 1964) finds in the Cartesian turn the seeds of modern atheism.

PART ONE ~ *The Preambles of Faith*

One ~ INTRODUCTION

A Bit of a Paradox

It would be too much to say that it is only religious believers who are interested in proofs of God's existence. But it is the rare unbeliever who holds that such proofs work, whereas most believing philosophers have argued for the soundness of a proof or proofs of God's existence. In fairness, it should be added that other believers—until recently all of them Protestants—reject the notion that there is a way whereby sinful man can arrive at truth about God, even simply that he exists, by unaided human reason.

One reason unbelievers reject proofs of God's existence is that they regard them simply as expressive of convictions already held by the one attempting the proof. The argument does not really ground the conviction that God exists, it is said; that conviction both antedates and survives the formulation of the proof. On this basis, we should expect proofs to contain fairly obvious flaws—obvious to the critic, that is, but eclipsed by the believer's faith. One who dismantles such proofs would be interested in their subjective origin only because he wants to understand how presumably rational people could embrace flawed arguments.

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Søren Kierkegaard, in the pseudonymous *Philosophical Fragments*, wishing to make the valid point that divine faith is not acquired by proofs of a philosophical sort, makes the far more radical point that no knowledge of God is naturally attainable. Proofs of the existence of God are wrongheaded because no proof establishes the existence of anything. That very arguable claim should not detract from Kierkegaard's fear that philosophical theism is an effort to establish the truth of the mysteries of faith. He had before him clear instances of this danger, notably in Hegel. But the philosophical theology advanced by such a pagan as Aristotle can hardly be regarded as embarked on such a project. If Aristotle has succeeded in establishing the exis-

tence of God and some of his attributes, as Thomas Aquinas thought he had, one should look to that ancient effort for light on the matter of philosophical theology when such fears as those of Kierkegaard arise. Thomas Aquinas was as adamant as Kierkegaard that the mysteries of faith cannot be established as true by mere natural reason, but, with the example of Aristotle before him, he was able to bring new clarity to the traditional Christian belief that men—even pagan Romans—can from the things that are made come to knowledge of the invisible things of God.

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The latter-day notion of arguments or proofs as wish fulfillment on the part of believers presumably would apply in principle to criticism of them as well. It is not unusual to find that the opponent of proofs of God's existence is pretty passionate about this, and his passion does not seem explicable solely in terms of his dismay at the alleged flawed logic of proofs traditionally offered. For all that, it is a salutary reminder that our antecedent convictions, pro or con, can have an influence unnoticed by us as we engage in the fashioning or dismantling of proofs and cause us, like Browning's Last Duchess, to be "too soon made glad."

Religious believers who reject proofs of God's existence do so because they regard such efforts as a misunderstanding of the only way in which the human mind can be related to God. That single way is faith, and faith is not an achievement but a gift. Thanks to the gift of faith I accept as true the articles of the Nicene Creed—or in the words of the simple act of faith, "all the truths that the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because thou has revealed them who canst neither deceive nor be deceived"—the acceptance, in short, is on the basis of the authority of the one revealing. If, having accepted these truths, I set out to prove them, I would seek to hold them on some basis other than faith.[1] I might reason about them in various ways—Thomas suggests in the text just cited in the note that I might argue that something not explicitly revealed is implicit in what has been—but such discourse would always take place within the ambience of faith, that is, holding on the basis of authority that certain things are true. These revealed truths thus function as premises of the argument and any conclusion derives its force from them.

1. One finds this passim in St. Thomas Aquinas; e.g., "Utitur tamen sacra doctrina etiam ratione humana: non quidem ad probandum fidem, quia per hoc tolleretur meritum fidei, sed per manifestandum aliqua alia quae traduntur in hac doctrina" (*ST* 1a.1.8.2m).

When I consider what it is I profess to believe, when I recite the creed, these misgivings of believers may seem well founded. Accepting as true that there are three persons in the one divine nature, that one of them became incarnate in Jesus Christ, that through his salvific act we have our only chance of salvation—familiar as all these truths are, a moment's reflection makes it clear that these are not the upshot of human argumentation of the ordinary sort. That is, these claims are not put forward as following on what anybody does know or can know about the way of the world by his unaided natural powers.

Fides quaerens intellectum

When John Paul II, in *Fides et Ratio*, discusses the relationship of philosophy and faith among Scholastic philosophers, he begins with St. Anselm of Canterbury who had intended to call his *Proslogion* by another title, namely, *Faith Seeking Understanding*. With this title he puts his cards on the table. Anselm comes forward as an author who accepts Christian revelation as true. It is as a believer that he seeks to understand the Psalmist's remark that "the fool has said in his heart there is no God." But doesn't that verse suggest that the denial of God is nonsense? If Anselm can show that this is indeed the case, he will have shown something that is so both for believers and unbelievers and, if it is absurd to deny that God exists, it would seem logically obligatory to accept God's existence, if one is going to talk about him at all.

Few texts have generated more comment than Anselm's *Proslogion* and its so-called Ontological Proof of the existence of God. There are believers—Karl Barth, for example—who deny that Anselm means the proof to work for anyone who doesn't have faith. But that would remove the fool from the target area of the argument, and it was for the fool's sake that Anselm set it out. If it can be shown, as Anselm thinks it can, that it makes no sense to deny the existence of God, that to do so is absurd and incoherent, this must be meant to cover any denial, especially the fool's.

But of course Barth is concerned lest we think that Anselm's proof or anything like it should establish what is *believed* in the strong sense—that is, held on the authority of God's revealing it—and thereby transmuted into an item of knowledge, established by proof. Right as that misgiving must seem, it is quite clear that among the truths that the believer accepts is "God exists."

And, if what Anselm set out to do works, then it becomes absurd to deny that God exists. But if it is absurd to deny that God exists, it seems pretty sensible to affirm that he exists. But does not to affirm something because it is sensible and provable contrast with affirming something on the authority of God revealing?[2] Would it be possible to say that "God exists" is both believed and known or proved?

Knowing and Believing

Sometimes we simply grasp what a thing is, sometimes we affirm or deny; it is this second operation of our mind that is susceptible of truth or falsity.[3] Ideas or concepts are not true or false in the strong sense of the term because entertaining them does not involve an assertion. To affirm or deny something of something else is minimally expressed as "*S* is *P*" (or "*S* is not *P*") as its formal expression. A property or quality is attributed to some subject—or removed from it by denial. When the mental judgment is in conformity with the way things are it is true, and this whether it is an affirmation or a denial. When judgment fails to match a state of affairs, it is defective, false. Of course, to hold certain truths on the basis of divine faith involves affirmations and denials as well. How do the affirmations and denials based on natural reason differ from those based on faith?

2. John Paul II writes, "For the saintly Archbishop of Canterbury the priority of faith is not in competition with the search which is proper to reason. Reason in fact is not asked to pass judgment on the contents of faith, something of which it would be incapable, since this is not its function. Its function is rather to find meaning, to discover explanations which might allow everyone to come to a certain understanding of the contents of faith"(*Fides et Ratio*, n. 42).

3. "Intellectus enim nostri, secundum Philsophum in III De anima [430a26], duplex est operatio: una qua format simplices rerum quidditates, ut quid est homo vel quid est animal, in qua quidem operatione non invenitur verum per se et falsum sicut nec in vocibus incomplexis; alia operatio intellectus est secundum quam componit et dividit affirmando vel negando, et in hac iam invenitur verum et falsum sicut et in voce complexa quae est eius signum"(*Q. D. de veritate* q. 14, a. 1). The reference to Aristotle recalls familiar doctrine. "The thinking then of the simple objects of thought is found in those cases where falsehood is impossible: where the alternatives of true or false apply, there we always find a putting together of objects of thought in a quasi-unity." See Thomas's commentary, lectio 11, n. 746. Those who read Aristotle according to the Bekker numbers encounter the distinction in the second chapter of the *Categories* 1a17, On Interpretation, 16a9ff: "As there are in the mind thoughts which do not involve truth or falsity, and also those which must be either true or false, so it is in speech. For truth and falsity imply combination and separation."

Self-Evident Propositions

There are a number of different mental attitudes involving the judgment that *S* is *P*. There are some instances of this that are known right off to be true. The judgment may be like "Every whole is greater than its part" or "When equals are removed from equals equals remain." Anyone who knows what a whole is and what a part is knows that the whole is greater than its part. And so too with the meaning of "equal." Such truths are said to be known immediately *(immediate),* by themselves *(per se)*. As opposed to what? As opposed to knowing the truth of a judgment as following on other things we know to be true.

True judgments are either immediately or mediately known to be such. The former are defined as what anyone upon hearing will accept as true. "Communis animi conceptio est quam quisque probat auditam," as Boethius put it in the *De hebdomadibus*: a common conception of the soul is one that anyone accepts upon hearing it (I.144–45). This suggests a distinction. There are some judgments such that there is an immediate relation between predicate and subject, yet a given knower may not see this. The reason for this is that knowledge of the meaning of the terms is required and sometimes the terms are not common ones or their meanings are uncommon. Hence the distinction between what is self-evident for the informed *(quoad sapientes)* and what is self-evident for anyone. The example of the whole and its part uses language anyone can be expected to understand. But to be told that angels are not in place, that angels are nowhere, relies on knowledge of the fit between bodies and being circumscriptively in place, on which basis it is immediately agreed that bodiless beings are not circumscriptively in place. Someone who did not know this connection, or perhaps not even that angels have no bodies, could not give his assent, immediate or otherwise, to the proposition. Thus, from the time of Boethius, there has been a distinction between what is self-evident to everyone and what is self-evident only to the informed or wise (*De trin.*, I.157–85).[4]

4. The *De hebdomadibus* addresses the question Whether everything that is is good just insofar as it is, and proposes to discuss this question by first laying out the axioms necessary for its resolution. If propositions self-evident to all are expressed in terms everyone knows, "ea autem quae in intellectu omnium cadunt sunt maxime communia, quae sunt ens, unum et bonum;

The methodological point of distinguishing between self-evident—*per se notae*—propositions and those whose truth is derived from knowledge of other propositions—*per aliqua alia fiunt nota*—is that, without the former, the latter could not be established. That is, if a proposition were known on the basis of others, and those others on the basis of yet others, and so on and on without end, the proposition with which we began could never be known to be true. That is, there must be some judgments or propositions that are self-evident and on which others ultimately depend if argument is to work.

Self-Evident but Not to Us

The distinction between propositions self-evidently true for everyone and those that are such only for the learned is based on a contingent distinction between human beings. At some point, for anyone, what are called propositions self-evident only to the learned will be a closed book, whereas human beings at large will give their immediate response to self-evident judgments that employ language known to all. One is unlearned though knowledgeable before he becomes learned. Propositions self-evident to all have priority.

But there is another way of distinguishing the self-evident or *per se notum*. Some things are said to be self-evident in themselves but not to human beings. The distinction is important for our purposes since it is made in reply to a first question asked about God's existence: Is it self-evident that God exists? (*ST* 1.2.1: "utrum Deus esse sit per se notum"). Thomas is going to argue that God's existence is not self-evident against the background of several considerations that suggest that it is.

1. If things known per se by us can be said to be naturally in us, then John Damascene's claim that knowledge of God's existence is naturally inserted in all seems to place the existence of God among things self-evident to us.

2. Moreover, the self-evidently known has been defined as what is known immediately once the terms are understood. And this was illustrated by propositions involving whole, part, and the like. But anyone hearing "God" knows that he is that than which nothing greater can be thought; but then he cannot merely be thought since to be thought *and* to exist is greater than

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et idea primo ponit hic Boethius quasdam conceptiones pertinentes ad ens, secundo quasdam pertinentes ad unum ex quo sumitur ratio simplicis et compositi . . . tertio ponit quasdam conceptiones pertinentes ad bonum . . ." (II.11–18).

merely to be thought; therefore, God must exist. In short, that God exists is self-evident.

3. It is self-evident that truth exists, since to deny it is to affirm it. Truth exists because there are true judgments. But any truth is a participation in truth itself. But God is truth. So it is self-evident that God exists.

~

It may be thought that to argue for the self-evidence of something is to show by that very fact that it is not self-evident but acceptable only on the basis of the premises of the argument provided. We will return to this important difficulty in a moment, but first we must look at the three efforts to prove that God's existence is self-evident.

Despite these three considerations, Thomas rejects the claim that God's existence is self-evident to us. The *sed contra* appeals to two authorities, Aristotle and the Psalmist. Anything whose opposite is thinkable is not self evident *(per se notum),* as Aristotle points out in several places (*Metaphysics* IV, 1005b11; lect 6, n. 597; I *Poster.* 10, 76b23; lect 19, 2). But it is possible to think the contradictory of "God exists." The Psalmist has written, "The fool has said in his heart there is no God" (Ps 52.1). This is to use against Anselm the text that triggered his reflections.

In developing his argument that God's existence is not self-evident to us, Thomas introduces the distinction we are concerned with. "Something can be self-evident [*per se notum*] in two ways, in itself or with reference to us." This is a surprising development because Thomas goes on to remind us that the immediacy of such propositions is explained in terms of the predicate's being part of the definition of the subject. It is because there are propositions whose terms are known to all that we can speak of first common principles, those based on terms like being and nonbeing, whole and part, and the like, whose meanings no one could fail to know. There are also those other examples where the terms are not as widely known which led to talk of what is self-evident to the learned. And it is this second set that leads Thomas to say that "God exists," considered in itself, is self-evident, *per se notum*, because the predicate is identical with the subject. He will show shortly that God is his existence. However, "because we do not know of God what He is, this is not self-evident to us, but has to be demonstrated by appeal to what is more known to us though less known according to nature, namely, effects" (*ST* 1a.2.1.c).

Propositions that are self-evident to the wise thus provide the bridge to speaking of propositions whose immediate connection of predicate and subject no man can comprehend in this life. The distinction between self-evident to all and self-evident to some is based on the contingency of the hearer's being uninstructed or instructed and not on the character of what the proposition expresses. This makes intelligible the claim that "God exists" expresses something of its nature self-evident even though human beings cannot know it as such but have to demonstrate its truth.[5]

Is Knowing God Easy?

In responding to the arguments on behalf of the self-evidence of God's existence, Thomas says important things to which we will be returning. Is knowledge of God natural? In a sense the answer is yes, for there is an implicit awareness of God in our desire for happiness, since only he can fulfill all our desires. But this is to know God in the way we might say we know Roscoe because we know someone is approaching though we did not know it was Roscoe. Even though it is the case that the one approaching is Roscoe, to know only that someone is approaching is to know that it is Roscoe only confusedly. In a similar way knowledge of God can be said to be entailed by our desire for happiness. But many think happiness consists of riches or power and the like, so this vague knowledge is not to know God as such.[6]

Thomas's assessment of Anselm's proof makes clear its implication that "God exists" is self-evident, so obvious that only a fool could deny it. So why fashion a proof? Suffice it to say for now that "proofs" of the self-evident are *reductiones ad absurdum*. They do not so much seek to establish the truth of a

5. That is, to one knowing God as he is in himself, "God exists" is self-evident, but such knowledge is reserved for those enjoying the beatific vision, the blessed, to whose knowledge Thomas holds that the *sacra doctrina* of such a work as the *Summa theologiae* is subalternated. See *ST* Ia, q. 1, a. 2. "Unde theologia quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinet, *differt secundum genus ab illa theologia quae pars philosophiae ponitur*" (Ibid., a. 1, ad 2; emphasis added).

6. In paragraph 19 of the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*, we read: "Nam atheismus, integre consideratus, non est quid originarium" (For atheism, taken all in all, is not the default position of the human mind). Perhaps this is a gloss on the truth that the pursuit of any good is an implicit desire for goodness itself and, since God is goodness, an implicit desire for God. Similarly, the pursuit of any truth may be said to be an implicit pursuit of Truth as such and, since God is Truth, an implicit pursuit of God.

proposition on the basis of other true propositions as to show that the denial of a proposition is incoherent.[7]

Propositional Attitudes

If truths are expressed in propositions and some are self-evidently such and others are not, we can define knowing by saying that the contradictory opposite of a proposition is rejected by one who knows. Different modes of assent or propositional attitudes can be distinguished in terms of the way a proposition is affirmed and its contradictory rejected. To know in the strong sense entails the rejection of the contradictory of what is known. If I know *p* (let *p* = the sum of the internal angles of a plane triangle is 180 degrees) to be true, I thereby know that its opposite is false. This is exemplified both in self-evident propositions and those whose truth is known on the basis of other truths. A proof in the strong sense establishes the truth of a proposition in such a way that its contradictory is wholly rejected.

I know that *p* is true entails I know that –*p* is false.

Asking a question can thus be seen as wondering which side of a contradiction should be affirmed. The flow of Thomas's *Summa theologiae* exhibits the character of human discourse. A question is open to several answers. To ask "Is it the case that *p*?" is a search for reasons for the truth of *p* and for the falsity of –*p*. Getting to the point where one can decide often takes us through clarifications as to what the question means since this may be obscured by the ambiguity of its constituent terms. Often a question is answered by making it clear that what appeared to be the question is not. If I am asked "Did you shoot a thief in your slippers?" I may say that the question is amphibolous because it is unclear whether I am being asked if the thief I shot was wearing my slippers and not if I was wearing my slippers when I shot him. Once this is clarified, the questioner may subside into indifference and that is the end of the matter. Not all values of *p* wear their meanings on their face and much preliminary discussion may be required in order to get to the point where a

7. That St. Anselm's proof does not work entails that the saint is left only with his divine faith that God exists (absent other unflawed proofs), but this does not alter the fact that what he attempted was a proof that would be good for the nonbeliever as well as the believer.

question is clear. With such provisos being understood, we can take the claim to know to be as defined.

Our discussion aims at clarifying the distinction between claiming to know something and claiming to believe something. The terms could of course be used synonymously. "I believe that *p*" might be a diffident or modest way of saying that one knows *p* to be true. So too Job says he knows that his redeemer lives though this would be more fittingly described as a matter of faith. What we are interested in is the meanings of 'to know' and 'to believe' which make them different propositional attitudes. But first we can notice that knowledge is often contrasted with opinion.

To have the opinion that *p* is true—"I opine (or think) that *p*"—is to assert one side of a contradiction but, in Thomas's phrase, *cum formidine alterius:* with the fear that its opposite might be true. An opinion is based on evidence but evidence that does not foreclose the possibility that one is mistaken. Obviously there can be degrees of probability in terms of greater or lesser evidence and some opinions can seem almost as durable as knowledge. Is it possible for the same truth to be an object of both knowledge and opinion? Not for the same person at the same time, since knowledge excludes opinion. One might have an opinion that later becomes a matter of knowledge but the reverse cannot happen save in a Pickwickian sense—what was thought to be knowledge really wasn't. If it really is, it excludes both its opposite and the possibility of opinion.[8]

Thomas sometimes introduces the topic of faith by locating it between knowledge and opinion. Religious faith or belief is best understood against the background of belief in a broader sense. Not in the way that knowing and opinion might both be described as instances of believing, of holding a certain proposition to be true on greater or lesser evidence but never wholly excluding that its contradictory is true as well as describing the way we hold a known truth as a belief (the ambiguity mentioned earlier), but in a sense where believing is distinguished from both of these. In the case of both

8. Knowledge in the strong sense (which is achieved by a cogent proof of God's existence) will be comparatively rare. Most of what we hold falls into the realm of what Thomas calls opinion, but given the role of evidence in grounding opinion this scarcely has the consequence of rendering the bulk of what we hold to be true to be merely subjective.

knowledge and opinion assent is elicited by things relevant to the content of the proposition. The evidence for *S* is *P* is either conclusive or only probable. Belief in the sense that now interests us would seem to introduce another factor.

When you return from overseas you are asked to fill out a customs form that asks your place of birth. You write "Baraboo, Wisconsin." Having filled in the rest of the form, you sign it in testimony of the truth of what you have written. You are unlikely to be quizzed about Baraboo as you seek to slip by the customs agent with several bottles of single malt scotch in your briefcase. The uneasiness you feel going through customs is the standard smuggler's malaise. But imagine that you are hustled off to a windowless room and under the glare of concentrated lamplight asked why you claim to have been born in Baraboo. "Because I was." "How do you know?" You're flabbergasted. Of course you know where you were born. Your parents told you. Or, if they have unfortunately gone to God, you saw it on your birth certificate. By and large we accept what we are told about our place of birth or what has been officially certified as our birthplace as true because that's what we were told. To the insinuating questions of the underemployed customs official you would eventually say, "Well, all right, I don't have vivid personal memories of entering the world in Baraboo, but my parents told me." "Aha! So you *believe* it, you don't *know* it."

Annoyingly pedantic as this must seem, you would doubtless admit the validity of the distinction. It is one thing to know in the sense of having had personal experience, say, and another to accept a claim as true on the basis of someone's say-so. Nevertheless, you may be so irked by this invocation of the distinction that you drive to Baraboo during the coming week and stop by the courthouse where either (1) you find your birth certificate on record and take it as certified that like other notables you were born in Baraboo, or (2) no record exists. The second possibility admits of any number of explanations but we will not pursue them save insofar as any of them might be taken to show that what we hitherto believed to be true is now feared to be false. Our trust was apparently unfounded. But take the happier case. There you are, duly recorded, the child of so-and-so and such-and-such. No news here. You knew it all along. Or rather, you "believed" it all along. Can you now say you "know" it?

Before pursuing that it is well to notice that there has to be some level of interest before we would talk about believing something or other. The county clerk who signed the birth certificate is Fritz Untermensch. There may be circumstances in which you would go around telling people that Fritz Untermensch recorded your birth but this may matter as little to you as the watermark on the certificate or the page number in the ledger or the color of ink Fritz used. But where you were born is something that could conceivably matter, as can the identification of your parents. An inheritance hangs in the balance, your trip to Baraboo may decide whether you live the rest of your life in sybaritic indolence or go on teaching introductory logic for God knows how many years into the foreseeable future.

Either it is a mark of what we believe that the truth we accept matters to us, or we would distinguish belief in that sense from holding all kinds of trivial things to be true, at least in the sense of not caring to dispute them, out of trust that records are reliable, and so on. If someone asked if you knew of the female clerk in Baraboo who had developed the quirky habit of signing herself Fritz Untermensch, you might find this fleetingly diverting but little more. It is not for nothing that William James spoke of the will to believe, whatever we think of what he went on to say. Will, interest, seems to play an important role in beliefs that matter.

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Clearly, if believing something is holding it to be true on someone's say-so, one cannot believe and know the same thing at the same time. This would be like seeing and not seeing something at the same time. The two are related, however, in that belief is often an expedient accepted on the way to knowledge. "One who would learn must believe," Aristotle said, or in the translation, "oportet addiscentem credere." One accepts certain claims on authority in the expectation that later one will know them to be true. When you began the study of trigonometry, you took a lot of things on trust that you later held on your own.

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Is this the justification for taking things on trust or faith, namely, that we will come to know them? There is an attitude that resents this kind of dependence on others for what we confidently say, an attitude Immanuel Kant identified with enlightenment, perhaps with the Enlightenment. "Enlight-

enment is a man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. *Sapere aude!* 'Have courage to use your own reason!'—that is the motto of enlightenment."[9] Meaning, I suppose, that one ought to pitch Kant into the fire and stop quoting Horace. Not that Kant is alone. All kinds of stern rationalists hold this view—in utter independence of one another, of course. It has been said that it is immoral to hold something on insufficient evidence, which may be taken as an argument for universal depravity. Much will depend on what is meant by "sufficient evidence," needless to say, but your confidence in having been born in Baraboo will be an early casualty of this program. In fact, rigorous, or even loose, application of it would pretty well wipe out most of the foundations of your daily life.

Imagining the average day of such a rationalist might be an assignment in a creative writing course. He rises to the ringing of his alarm, swings his legs off the bed, and searches for his slippers. He is about to stand when it occurs to him that the rug he thinks he sees could be thrown over an excavation dug in his floor while he was in the arms of Morpheus. You and I might shake our head and head untroubled for the bathroom but then we are morally lax. The fellow whose bedroom we have invaded accepts nothing on insufficient evidence and suddenly floor and walls and water faucets and electrical switches and every other aspect of his surroundings must be put to the test before he acts upon any beliefs he has about them. We will leave him in his unshowered condition. He might just as well go back to bed—if he can rely on it.

Such a policy, advanced in the name of reason, is manifestly unreasonable. Rather than establishing a rational existence it would immobilize us. Does this mean that it is reasonable to be unreasonable? What it means is that we must not give "reason" too narrow a meaning, or indeed a univocal meaning. Aristotle gave it as the mark of the educated man that he expects only as much certainty of a subject matter as it can deliver. And Cardinal

9. Immanuel Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?" in *Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1959), 85.

Newman said that it is unreasonable to hold that "reasonable" always means the same thing.

Our confidence in the bulk of things we hold as true is based on trust. We may not believe everything we read in the newspaper but it would be difficult to believe nothing in it. News reports, weather bulletins, the veracity of authors of articles in encyclopedias, birth certificates, traffic directions—the list goes on and on and seems to encompass the whole set of beliefs that get us through a day. Nor does this dependence on others seem confined to the practical order. Any scientist holds the bulk of what he holds on the basis of trust in other scientists. The vaunted scientific method is something he has applied to a risibly small fraction of the things he would roundly claim we now know. It would be practically impossible for a scientist to establish as true, to verify, all the claims even in his modest corner of one of the sciences. While that is true, it is important to notice that he can verify *any* of the claims of his science, however practically impossible it would be for him to verify them all. Thus, his believing them would seem to be merely a contingent fact. For all that, it shows the ineluctable role of trust and community even in this austere area of human endeavor.

Are all beliefs expedients that can in principle be replaced by knowledge? It would be absurd to regard all truth claims to be in the nature of scientific hypotheses that must be tested for truth or falsity. The implicit judgments involved in walking across the room are not held to be true on such a basis, nor could they be, by and large, verified. To assume that they can be and to make it a moral obligation to wait until the evidence is in is not to formulate an ideal that human beings should realize. The impossible cannot oblige, and this is an impossible demand.

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While beliefs can cover the range of things just suggested, believing seems to involve *someone* as well as *something* taken to be true. I hold something to be true on the say-so of someone, so I believe the person as well as what he tells me. What I am told and accept as true might range from initial remarks about trigonometry to the weather, and often this is just an expedient, a stage on the way to knowing. The person we trust for the truth of these may be a more or less anonymous lecturer but then again it could be your Uncle George. That a teacher will not mislead is one of the unstated assumptions

on the part of students, but this is a to-whom-it-may-concern commitment, not an agreement between this instructor and this particular student. The someone we believe becomes almost as important as what we believe when it is a matter of promises. It would seem odd if someone promised us that 2 + 2 = 4. A promise involves an undertaking on the part of the promiser and sometimes there is reciprocal promising, as in the wedding ceremony. How does the bride know the groom is telling the truth when he vows to love her until death? How does he know she is telling the truth? What does "telling the truth" mean here? The object of their mutual promising is not some state of affairs that they assert: the groom is not describing the act he is performing when he says the words, as the words "I thee wed" may seem to suggest. Self-referential as that is, "wed" makes it clear that a promise is being made about one's future and continued relation to the promisee. Here we seem to have a situation, and one most of the human race finds itself in, where our belief in another person and what he or she says seems to be a matter of pure faith.

A technological, pop-psychological age resists this and seeks to take the risk and mystery out of marriage by means of psychological tests or maybe just the multiple-choice quiz in *Reader's Digest*. "Are you and your beloved compatible?" Could a groom prove before the fact that he will be faithful? It is difficult to say how. Of course there are all kinds of facts in play when one decides to marry—the personality of the beloved, her family, the way she behaves. We wouldn't just marry anyone—our spouse may have, but we wouldn't—and marrying is certainly a reasonable activity, up to a point. But the marriage vows are not hypotheses that can be tested and verified in advance of exchanging them. The marriage of a man and a woman provides one of the most exalted, and common, forms of human faith. No wonder reference is often made to it when religious faith is discussed.

Religious Faith

Whenever Thomas Aquinas takes up the topic of divine faith, the virtue of faith, he invokes a number of definitions. One is from St. Augustine: to believe is to think with assent, *cum assensione cogitare*. Mental assent is of two kinds, the one when mind is moved by its proper object, something known either *per se* or *per aliqua alia*, the other when mind is prompted to assent

not as sufficiently moved by its object but by choice, inclining to one side of a contradiction. This happens in opinion, since one side of a contradiction does not impose itself; so, if I assent to *p* as opposed to *–p*, it is because I choose to, with a certain accompanying doubt and fear that the opposite may be true. Something of the same sort happens with faith, with this difference: that the believer, like the knower, wholly excludes the contradictory opposite of that to which he assents.[10]

Why does Augustine describe the assent of faith as involving *cogitare*? Thomas distinguishes several senses of this verb. Most generally, it is any intellectual consideration; secondly, it suggests inquiry, a searching that precedes the attainment of certainty. Deliberation that has not arrived at certainty can bear on the universal, and then be an activity of intellect. But, insofar as it bears on the particular, it is associated with that inner sense called the cogitative. How does this help us understand Augustine's definition of believing?

It is the second sense of the term *cogitare* that enables us to grasp Augustine's definition of believing. Some intellectual acts involve a firm assent without any such cogitation, as when one knows or understands; other intellectual acts have an unformed cogitation *(cogitationem informem)* without firm assent, whether it inclines to neither side of a contradiction, as in doubting; or to one rather than the other on a slight basis, as in suspecting; or as adhering to one side of a contradiction but with fear that the other is true, as in opinion.

> But the act of believing involves a firm assent to one part, and in this the believer is like one who knows or understands, yet his knowledge is not perfected by any manifest vision, and in that the believer is like the doubter, the one who suspects and one who holds an opinion. It is peculiar to the believer that his is an assenting cogitation, and in this his act is distinct from all other acts of intellect that bear on the true or false.[11]

If the cogitation does not explain the assent, what does? "The intellect of the believer is determined to one [side of a contradiction] not through reason

10. "Alio modo intellectus assentit alicui non quia sufficienter moveatur ab obiecto proprio, sed per quamdam electionem voluntarie declinans in unam partem magis quam in aliam. Et si quidem hoc fit cum dubitatione et formidine alterius partis, erit opinio: si autem fit cum certitudine, erit fides" (*ST* IIaIIae.1.4.c).

11. Ibid.

but through will. That is why assent here is taken to mean an act of intellect insofar as it is determined to one [side of a contradiction] by the will."[12]

Acts of the will are either elicited—willing, desiring—or commanded, the acts of other capacities that come under the sway of will. Talking is a voluntary act in this second sense, and so is faith. *Nemo credit nisi volens*, in the Augustinian phrase Thomas loves to cite.

Thomas suggests that all mental acts other than knowledge in the strict sense are commanded by will because the proper object of mind is insufficient to bring about assent to one side of a contradiction rather than the other.[13] Under the influence of will assent is given to one side of a contradiction when "it seems good to assent to the one rather than the other, and this is the disposition of the believer who believes what another says because to do so seems right or useful. And so it is that we are moved to believe what God tells us insofar as we are promised, if we believe, the prize of eternal life thanks to which will moves us to assent to things said by someone even though the mind is not moved by something that is understood, which is why Augustine says, 'other things a man can do unwillingly but he must be willing in order to believe.'"[14]

Because of the cause of assent in the act of faith, it is not the case that here cogitation or inquiry reaches its term and the mind is moved by its proper object to embrace one side of a contradiction, but rather that cogitation remains even after assent has been given. In faith assent and cogitation are equally balanced, for the assent is not caused by cogitation but by will. This is not the proper way for intellect to be determined to one, which is through understanding, and that is why the movement of inquiry does not

12. Ibid., ad 3m.

13. *Q. D. de veritate* q. 14, a. 1, c. See as well *ST* IIaIIae, q. 1, a. 4.

14. "Quandoque vero intellectus non potest determinari ad alteram partem contradictionis neque statim per ipsas diffinitiones terminorum sicut in principiis, nec etiam virtute principiorum, sicut est in conclusionibus demonstrationis; determinatur autem per voluntatem quae eligit assentire uni parti determinate et praecise propter aliquid quod est sufficiens ad movendum voluntatem non autem ad movendum intellectum, utpote quia videtur bonum vel conveniens huic parte assentire; et ista est dispositio credentis ut cum aliquis credit dictis alicuius hominis quia videtur ei decens vel utile. Et sic etiam movemur ad credendum dictis Dei in quantum nobis repromittur, si crediderimus, praemium aeternae vitae; et hoc praemio movetur voluntas ad assentiendum ad his quae dicuntur quamvis intellectus non moveatur per aliquid intellectum: et ideo dicit Augustinus quod 'cetera potest homo nolens, credere non nisi volens'" (Ibid.).

cease. Thinking and inquiry about what is believed goes on even though the assent is most firm. The mind, being moved by something extrinsic to its object, is, in St. Paul's words, rendered captive (2 Cor. 10.5). "Hence it is that the believer can feel an impulse to the opposite of what he most firmly holds, something that does not happen when one knows or understands."[15]

The Analogy of "Faith"

Thomas moves easily from human faith to divine faith because in both cases assent is commanded by will moved by some good. One way of distinguishing human faith from divine faith is to notice the difference in the goods that prompt assent. There is, Thomas observes, a twofold ultimate end of man, the ultimate end being what first engages the will; one such end is proportioned to human nature and man's natural powers suffice for attaining it (this is the happiness of which philosophers speak, whether contemplative, which lies in the activity of wisdom, or active, which consists first in the act of prudence and consequently in the acts of the other moral virtues).[16] But there is another good that is disproportionate to human nature and our natural powers do not suffice for the attaining of it, either for knowing it or for desiring it. It is promised by the divine liberality alone. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard. . . ."

Desire is prompted because of a fit between human nature and what is seen as fulfilling or perfective of it. Thomas speaks of there being a kind of inchoative possession of the good proportioned to our nature insofar as there preexist in us the self-evident principles of demonstration that are the seeds of wisdom's contemplation and the principles of natural law that are the seeds of moral virtues. But what in us can answer to a good that exceeds our nature? "In order for man to be ordered to the good of eternal life some beginning of that which is promised must come about in us, as is clear from John 27.3, 'This is life. . . .' So it is necessary that some beginning of eternal life come to be in us and this thanks to faith which due to an infused light accepts things which exceed natural knowledge."[17]

15. Ibid. This persistence of cogitation is the source of theology.

16. *Q. D. de veritate* q. 14, a. 3.

17. *Q. D. de veritate* q. 14, a. 2, c. Cf. Article 3, "Aliud autem est bonum ultimum quod considerat philosophus et theologus."

Human faith is not a virtue but divine faith is a virtue, one of the three theological virtues, so called because they have God for their object and order the one having them rightly to God; moreover they are infused in the soul by God and are treated only in divine revelation.[18] Thus, while the analogy with ordinary human trust or faith enables Thomas to describe divine faith, the latter is of a wholly different order. Nonetheless, the notion of natural virtue provides a bridge to speaking of faith as virtue. What is a virtue? That which makes the one having it good and makes his activity good. This definition is taken from the second book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* where moral virtues are being discussed. They are virtues in the primary sense, but as the *Ethics* itself makes clear the term is extended to cover the habits of speculative and practical intellect as well. Such habits as science and art are said to provide the ability to do certain things well but their particular instances are commanded by will. Unlike the moral virtues, which are an appetitive disposition to perform acts of a given kind, the so-called intellectual virtues provide only the capacity and not as well the correct use of the capacity.[19] "From the fact that a man possesses a science he is not made willing to consider the true but only capable of it; nonetheless, the direct consideration of the true does not pertain to science insofar as it is willed but because it directly tends to its object."[20] Intellectual habits are virtues, then, only in an extended or analogous sense of the term. Only habits that have will or appetite as their subject are virtues in the full sense of the definition taken from *Nicomachean Ethics* II.[21] Is the theological virtue of faith a virtue only in this extended sense?

Thomas locates prudence and faith midway between the moral virtues and those intellectual virtues that confer only capacity and not use. But there are habits whose subject is intellect that have a more essential relation to will. Prudence, or *phronesis*, is a habit of practical intellect whose end is determined by will and which under the influence of the desired end seeks the means of attaining it. Thus there is an essential dependence of prudence on the will and for this reason it is more of a virtue than is art, another habit of practical intellect, but one that, like science, provides only a capacity to act

18. *ST* IaIIae, q. 62, a. 1.

19. Ibid., q. 57, a. 1: ". . . duplici ratione aliquis habitus dicitur virtus . . . uno modo, quia facit facultatem bene operandi; alio modo quia cum facultate facit etiam usum bonum."

20. *Q. D. de virtutibus in communi* a. 7.

21. ". . . potissime habent rationem virtutis" (*Q. D. de virtutibus in communi* a. 7).

well but not the disposition to do so. It is in this context that Thomas argues that theological faith is a virtue in a more proper sense than even prudence.

> Faith perfects the speculative intellect insofar as it is commanded by will, as is clear from its act, for a man does not assent to things which are above reason unless he wills to, as Augustine observes when he says that a man can only believe if he is willing. Faith is in speculative intellect insofar as it is subject to the command of will much as temperance is in the concupiscible appetite insofar as it comes under the command of reason. Hence in believing will commands the intellect not only with respect to performing the act but also by determining its object. It is by a command of will that intellect assents to a definite belief much as the concupiscible appetite thanks to temperance tends to a means determined by reason.[22]

It is the supernatural ultimate end that governs the virtue of faith as the natural ultimate end is the measure of the acquired virtues. Happiness as attainable by the acts of our natural powers is the ultimate end proportioned to our nature. A virtue is the complement of a power that perfects its activity with reference to the end. The theologian, by contrast with the philosopher, considers the ultimate end that exceeds the capacity of our nature, eternal life. Therefore he does not consider the good of human acts absolutely but rather with reference to the concrete end that is ultimate: acts will be good to the degree that they are ordered to the final end, that is, merit eternal life, and any habit eliciting such an act will be a virtue.[23]

Not surprisingly, some have thought that faith should be located in practical rather than in theoretical intellect, since the former bears on that to which affection inclines and is ordered to some work. Thomas remarks that those who say this seem not to understand what practical intellect is. It is only by extension to a work, he says, that the intellect becomes practical; relation to affection whether antecedent or consequent does not make intellect cease to be theoretical or speculative. After all, unless someone were affectively ordered to

22. Ibid. "Fides enim perficit intellectum speculativum, secundum quod imperatur ei a voluntate; quod ex actu patet: homo enim ad ea quae sunt supra rationem humanam, non assentit per intellectum nisi quia vult; sicut Augustinus dicit quod credere non potest homo nisi volens. Ita et similiter erit fides in intellectu speculativo, secundum quod subiacet imperio voluntatis: sicut temperantia est in concupiscibili secundum quod subiacet imperio rationis. Unde voluntas imperat intellectui, credendo, non solum quantum ad actum exequendum, sed quantum ad determinationem obiecti; quia ex imperio voluntatis in determinatum creditum intellectus assentit; sicut et in determinatum medium a ratione concupisicibilis per temperantiam tendit."

23. *Q. D. de veritate* q. 14, a. 3.

considering the truth he would not take pleasure in the act of understanding, which flies in the face of what Aristotle says in *Nicomachean Ethics* X where he locates the keenest pleasure in contemplative activity. Nor does just any relation to a work make intellect practical since a simply speculative consideration can be a remote occasion for action. Thus coming to know that the soul is immortal can influence action. But practical intellect provides a proximate rule of action insofar as it considers the operable things and the reasons for acting or the causes of the opus. The truth of faith is not an operable one but an uncreated truth that concerns speculative intellect, though of course it can be, by the mediation of love, a remote cause of acting.[24]

Can One Know and Believe the Same Thing?

Is seeing believing, or does seeing preclude belief? To believe is to hold that something is true on the say-so of another, something we would not do if we knew the truth of the claim. When I am looking out the window at the rain it would be weird to say that I believe it's raining because of what I just heard on the radio. Seeing is one thing and believing is another. Of course, the believer must see what it is he is to believe and in that sense seeing is a presupposition of belief.[25] But can one both know and believe the same truth? With this question we arrive at the threshold of what Thomas Aquinas came to call the *praeambula fidei*.

While I must know that the Trinity of persons in the Godhead is to be believed, this is not something I can understand. It is neither self-evident nor could it be established as true on the basis of anything I can be said to know in the strong sense. Moved by the promise of eternal life, I choose, under the influence of grace, to accept the Trinity as true; that is, I believe it.

In the garden variety sense of "believe," we can say that something that is believed by one person is known by another. The nuclear physicist murmurs some unintelligible claim, say *p*, and I nod in assent, taking his word for it. I

24. *Q. D. de veritate* q. 14, a. 4, c.

25. "Et sic sunt visa ab eo qui credit: non enim crederet nisi videret ea esse credenda, vel propter evidentiam signorum vel propter aliquid huiusmodi" (*ST* IIaIIae, q. 1, a. 4, ad 2m). I have to know what the articles of the creed are before I can affirm my belief in them, but what I affirm is a truth I do not understand but accept on the basis of divine authority. ". . . auditus est verborum significantium ea quae sunt fidei: non autem est ipsarum rerum de quibus est fides" (Ibid., ad 4m).

may decide to become a nuclear physicist myself and the day comes when I smile vaguely as I remember that while once long ago I believed *p*, now that I have become a man and a nuclear physicist I know that *p* is true.[26] There is thus no problem with one man believing and another man knowing a given truth at the same time nor with the same man believing it and knowing it at different times. For all that, it is clearly impossible for anyone to know and believe the same truth at the same time.

In the case of Christian beliefs—the Trinity, the Incarnation, the forgiveness of sins—we can say that while they must be believed in this life, that they can only be believed now, the reward for faith is an eternal life where we will see even as we are seen, where faith and hope will pass away and only charity remain. No need to believe what is right before our eyes in the beatific vision. In this sense, religious faith is an expedient, and a trial. For the mind to be moved by will to accept something as true is not its proper or natural way to claim something to be true. The believer's mind is rendered captive and his faith must seem a scandal and a folly to unbelievers. When the believer is taunted by the disbeliever, mocked for accepting as true what he can in no way know to be true, he would seem to have to just grin and bear it.[27]

Miracles as Proofs

But is this really so? We read that many came to believe in Christ and his claim to be the Son of God because of the miracles that he performed. Take the raising of Lazarus. Jesus learns of the death of his friend and after a few days' delay goes to see the surviving sisters of the dead man. Both Martha and

26. We will waive whether what Aristotle and Thomas mean by "know" and "science" is applicable to nuclear physics. The scientist may exhibit a good deal of modesty about the claims he makes and profess himself to be ready to drop them in favor of more powerful hypotheses. For all that, there is an obvious difference between the tyro and the Nobel recipient.

27. Well, not quite. While he cannot establish the truth of what he believes by appeal to what is known, he can advance arguments for the reasonableness of believing, but of course such arguments do not establish the truth of the articles. For all that, such arguments are important lest faith appear to be the acceptance as true of that which flies in the face of what everyone knows. Some believers, like Tertullian and Kierkegaard, characterized the object of faith as absurd and believing as a movement in virtue of absurdity, but such hyperbole, apart from its role in distinguishing religious faith from knowledge, invites misunderstanding. Mild fideism may be described as the claim that nothing we know counts for or against the faith; strong fideism can be described as the claim that what we believe contradicts what we know.

Mary remark that if Jesus had been with them their brother would not have died. Jesus asks Martha if she doesn't believe that her brother will rise from the dead and she says, yes, on the last day. And Jesus, announcing that he is the resurrection and the life, goes to the tomb, has the stone rolled back, and calls to Lazarus, who has been dead three days, to come forth. And the dead man walks out of the tomb.

Doesn't such a miracle establish that Jesus is what he claims to be? Isn't it a proof?

Or consider the event that changed Thomas from doubter to believer. Not yet having seen the risen Jesus, in a Kantian mood he refused to accept it on the testimony of the other apostles and said that only if he could touch the very wounds in the body would he be convinced. And Christ appeared, invited Thomas to check his wounds, and Thomas cried, "My Lord and my God." Whereupon Jesus remarks that those who believe without seeing are blessed, meaning that Thomas sees and therefore believes. But why not say that he sees and therefore he knows that Christ has risen from the dead?

Thomas Aquinas holds that miracles and signs establish the credibility of the speaker but not the truth of faith. Obviously, miracles count toward believing. The question is: Are they sufficient? If they were, any witness of a miracle would be led to accept Christ on penalty of not believing the testimony of his senses. But where, then, would be the difficulty, and merit, of faith? "One who believes has what is sufficient to lead him to believe," Thomas writes. "He is led by the authority of divine teaching confirmed by miracles and, what is more, by the inner instinct of God inviting him. He does not lightly believe. But he does not have what could lead to knowing, and thus the merit of faith is not removed."[28]

Insofar as by "miracle" is meant some feat that God alone could perform or that could only be performed with the help of God, and if anyone who sees Lazarus emerge from the tomb is the witness of a miracle, it would seem to follow that all witnesses are committed to ascribing divine activity to Jesus. Thus it seems that they could not reasonably withhold their assent to the divinity of Jesus.

But it is a recurrent note of the Gospels that not all who saw believed.

28. *ST* IIaIIae, q. 2, a. 9, ad 3m; see too q. 5, a. 2.

On the assumption that they did indeed see, the question is: How describe what they saw? It cannot be that they saw a miracle in the strong sense, for then they would be attributing divine activity to Jesus. But certainly they saw something wonderful. Perhaps we must distinguish two senses of "miracle": "miracle[1]" and "miracle[2]," with miracle[2] being merely something marvelous, inexplicable, attention getting, and miracle[1] being the recognition that this is an act only God could perform. On this basis, miracle[2] would have a role to play in coming to believe, but the acceptance of the event as miracle[1] would be already to believe and this would not be prior to belief. "Note that arguments that lead to faith, like miracles, do not prove faith in itself, but prove the truth of the one announcing the faith. And thus they do not produce knowledge of what is of faith."[29]

Preambles of Faith

It is in the course of discussing the compatibility of faith and knowledge that Thomas introduces what he comes to call the "preambles of faith." There are, he points out, two kinds of truth about God, those that were known even by the pagan philosophers and those that have been proposed for our belief by revelation and that could not otherwise be known by us—known that they are to be believed, that is. "In what concerns God there are two kinds of truth. Some things are true of God which wholly exceed the human rational capacity, for example, that God is one and three. But others are such that even natural reason can attain them, for example, that God exists, that God is one, and other like truths, which philosophers demonstratively proved of God, led by the light of natural reason."[30] Let us trace the constancy of the doctrine and the development of the terminology.

In his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, an early work,[31] Thomas has this to say:

29. ". . . [D]icendum quod argumenta quae cogunt ad fidem, sicut miracula, non probant fidem per se, sed probant veritatem annuntiantis fidem. Et ideo de his quae fidei sunt scientiam non faciunt" (III *Sent.* d. 24, a. 2, sol. 3).

30. I *Summa contra gentes* cap. 3.

31. Written in Paris 1252–1254, according to Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., in his *Initiation à saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Fribourg, 1993), 485.

What belongs to faith per se belongs to it always and everywhere, whereas something believed by one person but not another is only accidentally of faith. What exceeds the human intellect as such cannot be demonstratively proved because demonstration is grounded in the grasp of principles, so such things cannot be known. But there are some things which come before faith, on which faith bears only incidentally since they might exceed this person's intellect but not human intellect as such and can be demonstrated and known, such as the fact that God exists. This is believed by one who cannot establish it by demonstration because faith as faith sufficiently inclines to everything concomitant or consequent or precedent.[32]

In this early text, Thomas uses the participle *praecedentia* to cover such truths as that God exists, which can be known and demonstrated, even though many happen to believe them.

In the same work, he speaks of things that are prerequisite to the faith *(praeexiguntur)* or that are placed before it *(praesupponunt)*.

Just as grace which perfects the will presupposes the nature that it perfects, so natural knowledge comes before [*substernitur*] faith, and this faith presupposes and reason can prove, such as that God exists and that God is one, incorporeal, intelligent and other like things. And faith sufficiently inclines to these such that one who hasn't arguments for them assents to them through faith.[33]

And then, as will become his habit, he cites the five reasons Mose Maimonides gives for such knowable truths being objects of faith:

32. "Ad secundum quaestionem dicendum quod fides, ut dictum est, comparatur ad aliquid dupliciter, scilicet per se et per accidens. Et quod per se pertinet ad fidem pertinet ad eam semper et ubique; ideo quod pertinet ad fidem ratione hujus vel illius, non est fidei per se, sed per accidens. Sic ergo quod simplicter humanum intellectum excedit ad Deum pertinens, nobis divinitus revelatum ad fidem per se pertinet. Quod autem excedit intellectum hujus vel illius et non omnis hominis, non per se, sed per accidens ad fidem pertinet. Ea autem quam omnem intellectum humanum excedunt non possunt per demonstrationem probari, quia demonstratio in intellectu principiorum fundatur; et ideo hujusmodi non possunt esse scita. Sed quaedam quae sunt praecedentia ad fidem, quorum non est fides nisi per accidens, inquantum sciilicet excedunt intellectum hujus hominis et non hominis simpliciter, possunt demonstrari et sciri, sicut hoc quod est Deum esse: quod quidem est creditum quantum ad eum cujus intellectus ad demonstrationem non attingit; quia fides, quantum in se est, ad omnia quae fidem concomitantur vel sequuntur vel praecedunt sufficienter inclinat" (III *Sent.* d. 24, a. 2, sol. 2).

33. "Sicut autem est in gratia perficiente affectum quod praesupponit naturam, quia eam perficit; ita et fidei substernitur naturalis cognitio quam fides praesupponit et ratio probare potest, sicut Deum esse et Deum esse unum, incorpoream, intelligentem, et alia hujusmodi. Et ad hoc etiam sufficienter fides inclinat, ut qui rationem ad hoc habere non potest, fide eis assentit" (III *Sent.* d. 24, a. 3, sol. 1).

"And this comes to be necessary for five reasons, as Rabbi Moses says: First, because of the exaltedness of the matter, lifted as it is so far above the senses whereby our life is nourished. Second, because although man's intellect is naturally ordered to knowing divine things, he cannot actualize this capacity by himself. Third, because there are so many prerequisites to coming to knowledge of the divine by way of reason: practically the whole of philosophy, which only few can know, is ordered to knowledge of the divine. That is why faith is necessary in order that all might have some knowledge of the divine. Fourth, because some are naturally lazy. Fifth, because the necessities of life occupy men and draw them away from a diligent consideration of the divine."[34]

It is in his commentary on the *De trinitate* of Boethius, written in 1257, also in Paris, that the terminology becomes fixed.

Just as sacred doctrine is founded on the light of faith, so things in philosophy are founded on the light of natural reason, and that is why it is impossible that the things of philosophy should be contrary to what is of faith, though they fall short of it. Philosophy does contain certain semblances and preambles to it [faith] just as nature is the preamble to grace.[35]

And then the full phrase itself: "Sacred doctrine makes use of philosophy in three ways. First, in demonstrating those things which are preambles of faith which it is necessary for faith to know, such as those things that are proved of God by natural arguments, for example, that God is, that God is one, and other like things which are proved of God or of creatures and that faith presupposes."[36] But then he will use the phrase to cover all the sciences that are

34. "Quod quidem necessarium fit propter quinque, ut dicit Rabbi Moyses:

Primo, propter altitudinem materiae secundum elevationem a sensibus, quibus vita connutritur . .

Secundo, quia quamvis intellectus hominis naturaliter sit ordinatus ad divina cognoscenda, non tamen potest in actum exire per seipsum . . .

Tertio, quia ad cognitionem divinorum per viam rationis multa praeexiguntur, cum fere tota philosophia ad cognitionem divinorum ordinetur: quae quidem non possunt nisi pauci cognoscere. Et ideo oportuit fidem esse ut omnes aliquam cognitionem de divinis haberet.

Quarto, quia quidam naturaliter sunt hebetes. . . .

Quinto, quia homines occupantur circa necessaria vitae et retrahuntur a consideratione divinorum diligenti" (Ibid.).

35. "Sicut autem sacra doctrina fundatur supra lumen fidei, ita in philosophia fundatur supra lumen naturale rationis; unde impossibile est quod ea quae sunt philosophiae sint contraria his quae sunt fidei, sed deficiunt ab eis. Continent tamen aliquas eorum similitudines et quaedam ad ea *praeambula*, sicut natura praeambula est ad gratiam" (*In Boethii de trin.* q. 2, a. 3, c).

36. "Sic ergo in sacra doctrina philosophia possumus triplicter uti. Primo ad demonstrandum ea quae sunt *praeambula fidei*, quae necesse est in fide scire, ut ea quae naturalibus rationi-

preambles to and that serve theology.[37] They may come before it in the order of learning but they are of less dignity than it. And, noting that it is in metaphysics that things are proved of God, he adds that this science presupposes all the others that are preambles to it.[38] He gives again the five reasons of Maimonides why what can be known was revealed, stating the third as follows:

"Third, because of the many preambles required for knowledge of God by way of reason. For this requires knowledge of nearly all the sciences, since knowledge of the divine is the goal of them all. But only a very few acquire these preambles."[39]

Thomas seems never to use the phrase "preambles of faith" in the *Summa contra gentes*, but the text quoted above concerning the two kinds of truth about God and subsequent discussions give the substance of the doctrine. But when we come to the *Summa theologiae*, the phrase is fixed and shows up in the very first question of the *Prima pars*.

Summa theologiae Ia.2.2.1m

In reply to the first it should be said that "God exists" and the like, which natural reason can know of God, as is said in Romans 1:19, are not articles of faith but preambles to the articles, for faith presupposes natural knowledge as grace does nature and perfection the perfectible. There is nothing to prevent what is in itself demonstrable and knowable from being accepted as believable by one who does not grasp the demonstration.[40]

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bus de deo probantur, ut deum esse, deum esse unum et alia huiusmodi vel de deo vel de creaturis in philosophia probata, quas fides supponit" (Ibid.).

37. "Ad septimum. . . . Et similiter theologia, cum omnes aliae scientiae sint huic quasi famulantes et *praeambula* in via generationis, quamvis sint dignitate posteriores, potest uti principiis omnium aliarum scientiarum."

38. "Et etiam hoc patet in ordine scientiarum, quia scientia quae est de causis altissimis, scilicet metaphysica, ultimo occurit homini ad cognoscendum, et tamen in scientiis *praeambulis* oportet quod supponantur quaedam quae in illa plenius innotescnt; unde quaelibet scientia habet suppositiones, quibus 'oportet addiscentem credere'" (*In Boethii de trin.* q. 3, a. 1. c).

39. "Tertio, propter multa *praeambula*, quae exiguntur ad habendam cognitionem de deo secundm viam rationis. Requiritur enim ad hoc fere omnium scientiarum cognitio, cum omnium finis sit cognitio divinorum; quae quidem *praeambula* paucissimi consequntur" (emphasis added).

40. "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod Deum esse et alia huiusmodi quae per rationem naturalem nota possunt esse de Deo, ut dicitur Rom i, 19, non sunt articuli fidei, sed *praeambula ad articulos*; sic enim fides praesupponit cognitonem naturalem, sicut gratia naturam, et perfectio perfectibile. Nihil enim prohibet illud quod secundum se demonstrabile est et scibile, ab aliquo accipi ut credible, qui demonstrationem non capit" (emphasis added).

In the treatise on faith, he reverts to the earlier language and this underscores the continuity of the teaching:

Summa theologiae IIaIIae. 1.5, ad 3

To the third objection it should be said that things that can be demonstratively proven are included in what is to be believed, not because the faith of all bears on them absolutely, but because they are prerequisites of the things which are of faith and must be presupposed at least by faith on the part of those not having the demonstration.[41]

This, then, is the familiar Thomistic teaching. There are two kinds of truth about God: some truths can be proved, others cannot. The first are proved in philosophy and are presupposed by faith and by the theology based upon it. By and large, believers hold both kinds of truth on faith, since the preambles are implicit in what has been revealed. But to believe truths about God that can be known does not make them of faith as such; truths that can be accepted only on divine authority belong as such to faith. Furthermore, although the preambles of faith are those truths about God which the philosophers have proved, they are included in revelation. Revelation, then, can be considered to be a body of truths of which the preambles are a subset. What, then, of a believer who is a philosopher and who fashions a cogent proof of God's existence? Does he stop believing that God exists? This follows on the truth that it is impossible to know and to believe the same truth at the same time.[42] For all that, such a believer, say, Thomas Aquinas, continues to recite the creed, "I believe in God." In the Latin, it is *Credo in unum Deum*, which makes clear that the God in whom one continues to believe is not God as he is known. But doesn't the proof establish that God is one? It does, but to believe that God is one *and* a trinity of persons can only be believed.

Why Reveal the Knowable?

It is obvious that the phrase "preambles of faith" is one devised and used from the side of belief; it is the believer who compares truths about God that

41. "Ad tertium dicendum quod ea quae demonstrative probari possint inter credenda numerantur, non quia de ipsis sit simpliciter fides apud omnes, sed quia *praeexiguntur* ad ea quae sunt fidei, et oportet ea saltem per fidem praesupponi ab his qui eorum demonstrationem non habet" (emphasis added).

42. ". . . similter de Deo potest aliquis demonstrative scire quod sit unus, et credere quod sit trinus. Sed de eodem secundum idem non potest simul in uno homine scientia nec cum opinione nec cum fide" (Ibid., ad 4).

he holds only thanks to the grace of faith and those truths about God that philosophers came to know by way of demonstrative proof. But what is referred to by the phrase is precisely those philosophically established truths about God. Looking at the sum of revealed truths, the theologian will notice the subset he calls preambles and he will distinguish them from the mysteries of faith. Only the latter belong to faith per se: there is no other way to hold them as true in this life. But along with the revelation of the mysteries, that is, those truths about God that would not be known apart from God revealing them—for example, the Trinity of persons—believers are given as well the truths that the philosophers have proved. Implicit in the mysteries is of course the truth that God exists and that he is one and intelligent and the like.[43]

Human knowledge takes its rise from the senses and it is on the basis of what is known of sensible things that the existence of God can be known as well as other truths about him. That this is possible follows from the fact that it is actual: *ab esse ad posse valet illatio*. Thomas's confidence is grounded in his judgment that Aristotle has fashioned a sound proof of God's existence and that he himself has done so. Why, then, should such philosophically established truths be revealed?

In one sense, it would seem that there is no choice. If they are implicit in the mysteries, then they are implicitly revealed along with them. Anyone believing in the triune God accepts the underlying truth that God exists. But one can know that God exists and that there is only one God and still not be committed implicitly or otherwise to the mysteries. The relation is asymmetrical.

If there is an inevitability about the inclusion of the preambles in the revelation of the mysteries, this nonetheless represents a great mercy. While the philosophical achievement of truths about God is a given for Thomas, he sees it as Aristotle did: as the goal toward which the whole of philosophy tends, a goal whose attainment reposes on everything that has gone before it. It is in the *Metaphysics*, Book XII, that we find the most remarkable natural theology ever achieved. But its cogency can be appreciated only if we have taken the long path to it. And that is the first reason for the fittingness of the revelation of the preambles.

43. ". . . dicendum quod ea quae demonstrative probari possunt inter credenda numerantur, non quia de ipsis sit simpliciter fides apud omnes: sed quia praeexiguntur ad ea quae sunt fidei, et oportet ea saltem per fidem praesupponit ab his qui horum demonstrationen non habent" (*ST* IIaIIae, q. 1, a. 5, ad 3m).

Most people are prevented from achieving this knowledge by lack of talent or time or opportunity, or perhaps indolence. Furthermore, given the time it takes to achieve such truths about God and given the fundamental importance for life of knowing that God exists, without revelation men would run the risk of leading godless lives. Moreover, not everything philosophers say about God is acceptable: errors do creep in and the knowledge of God is distorted. What a boon it is, accordingly, that in one fell swoop by faith one can come into possession of sure and accurate knowledge of God.

Who Needs the Preambles?

The arguments for holding that all truths about God have been revealed would seem to consign philosophical knowledge of God to a surpassed period in human culture. Perhaps natural reason can continue to grope for some intimation of God in the case of those who have not yet heard the good news of revelation, but believers are exempted from such labor. If all previous history was a *praeparatio evangelica*, it need not be repeated after the Gospel has been preached. And so it would seem for the *praeambula fidei*.

A first thing to say about this is that the Church thinks otherwise. A second thing is that Thomas Aquinas thought otherwise. Unfortunately, these obvious truths were obscured during the second half of the twentieth century. Flawed understandings of the nature of Christian philosophy, a tendency to disparage the natural in favor of the supernatural, the suggestion that the philosophy of St. Thomas is to be found only in his theological works, and cannot be separated from them—these and other positions that we are about to examine had the effect of weakening the notion of the *praeambula fidei*. It is particularly ironic that the most influential weakenings of the *praeambula* were put forward as efforts to rescue the real Thomas Aquinas from his benighted followers in the Thomistic tradition. Thus the great and holy Cardinal Cajetan has been singled out for obloquy. It is our task, therefore, to rescue the authentic Thomas Aquinas from the allegedly "real Thomas Aquinas" of those who mocked and attacked the great commentator. Of course, just as Cajetan was a target of opportunity for critics of traditional Thomism, so our defense of him is not meant to be confined to him. Adapting what Leo XIII said of Thomas himself, we might say "There is more in Cajetan than Cajetan."

PART TWO ~ *The Erosion of the Doctrine*

PROLOGUE

The *praeambula fidei* presuppose that philosophy is distinct from theology, an autonomous discipline whose arguments do not depend on the acceptance of any revelation. Of course, it is philosophy in the classical sense that provides the *praeambula fidei*, a search for understanding fueled by wonder that in its quest for causes rises finally to knowledge of the first cause of all that is. For Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle was the paradigmatic instance of the philosopher and his writings conveyed what the unaided human intellect can know of the divine. Philosophical proofs of God's existence and the establishment of some of his attributes provide the content of what came to be called *praeambula fidei*.

The phrase itself is a theological one; it is the label the believer puts on achievements first made by nonbelievers. Of course Aristotle did not see his philosophical effort as propaideutic to a further science that would be called theology because it had the revealed God as its subject. It is the believer who sees the culminating achievement of the telos of philosophy in those terms. But what the phrase *praeambula fidei* names does not depend on the faith of the thinker—or his lack of it. The presence or absence of religious faith is incidental to philosophical arguments as such.

But believers have always had a special stake in the status of the *praeambula fidei* because of the implications of Romans 1:19–20. Vatican I made it *de fide* that human beings can, apart from grace and revelation, come to knowledge of God from the things that are made. St. Paul, both in Athens and in Rome, presupposed a knowledge of the divine to which he could relate the truth that God had become incarnate in Jesus. Acknowledgment of the existence of God removes a massive impediment to accepting the truths of Christianity. The *praeambula fidei* have therefore always played a role in apologetics, the discourse meant to dispose one for the grace of faith.

The classical understanding of philosophy has been abandoned by philosophers over the decades that have been dominated by what is called mod-

ern philosophy. Increasingly, secular philosophers looked with a dim eye on efforts to prove the existence of God, but then, as I suggested in *Characters in Search of Their Author*, the possibility of *any* knowledge, of the world, let alone of God, has been rendered problematic by recent philosophical positions. This has made the task of the defender of the *praeambula fidei* more complicated.

His first task must be to recover the classical view of philosophy. To do so is initially and largely a matter of showing that the positions that have sapped the foundations of classical philosophy are themselves incoherent and thus untenable. That is, the new antiprinciples do not represent a rational alterative to the principles of classical philosophy. The first task is to reestablish realism—that is, that in knowing we first know the world and not our concepts—not by proving it, since only a fool can deny it, but by showing that the denial is foolish. Undeniably, the believer is motivated to take on this task by the importance the *praeambula fidei* have in the teaching of the Church. In such motivation we find the foundation of Christian philosophy properly understood.

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Difficulties for the *praeambula fidei* have not come from developments in secular philosophy alone, however. Developments within Thomism itself have had the doubtless unintended effect of enfeebling the notion of the *praeambula fidei*. The revival of Thomism and the rise of medieval studies, while distinct in many respects, are in others closely related. Medieval research provided ammunition for those who had to answer the charge that during the ages of faith, during the Middle Ages, for a millennium, no philosophy had been done, but only theology. A secular conception of philosophizing that was one of the products of the turn philosophy had taken with Descartes did not find itself mirrored in the Middle Ages and, arguing that this was no accident, it was eventually declared that faith and philosophy were antithetical, that religious belief is an impediment to philosophy, and that philosophy properly understood makes religious faith untenable. In response to this challenge, new thought was given to the way in which Christians engage in philosophy, to the notion of Christian philosophy. Ironically, in some cases, this led to the calling into question of the autonomy of philosophy, and therefore of the *praeambula fidei*.

Etienne Gilson, one of the architects of medieval studies and a paradigmatic Thomist,[1] in his Gifford Lectures published as *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, argued that philosophy had flourished in the atmosphere of the faith and that important philosophical concepts and arguments were formulated that conceivably would not have been formulated without the motivation provided by the faith of the thinker.[2] This more or less historical understanding of Christian philosophy led Gilson over the years to positions that severely criticized the Thomistic tradition and to judge that almost no one had grasped the significance of *esse* which he saw as the key, the *clef de vôute*, of the thought of Thomas Aquinas. By suggesting that the subject of philosophy is the *revelabilia* and that the order of philosophy is the order of the *Summa theologiae*, Gilson seemed to have made philosophy Christian in its essence.

Henri de Lubac, a Jesuit who as a student on the Isle of Jersey had dissembled his incipient Thomism because of the regnant Suarezianism in his order, came to think that the Thomistic school was as opposed to Thomas as many of its overt foes. Thus he twinned Denis the Carthusian, an anti-Thomist, and Cardinal Cajetan, for many *the* interpreter of Thomas (his commentary on the *Summa theologiae* accompanies the Leonine edition of that work), on the matter of the mind's relation to revelation, arguing that the way these two understood the "obediential potency" that is actuated by the beatific vision made human nature an enclosed whole, wholly autonomous and self-sufficient, such that the supernatural could only come to it as miraculous. De Lubac stressed the *natural* desire for the beatific vision. This had implications for the *praeambula fidei* that I shall argue were unhelpful.

A third, and final example, Marie-Dominique Chenu, was a Dominican, who as the youngish rector of the Saulchoir, the Dominican House of Studies, gave in 1936 a St. Thomas day address that became a little book, *Une école de théologie*. In it, Chenu made suggestions for a new understanding of the relation of philosophy and theology which also, we shall see, had deleterious consequences for the *praeambula fidei*.

1. The phrase is meant to convey high praise. Perhaps I should say, by way of preamble, that the need I feel to criticize Gilson and de Lubac and Chenu is prompted by the requirements of this study, and ought not be taken as the absence of a profound sense of indebtedness to them all, particularly to Etienne Gilson.

2. Bibliographical references will be found in the relevant chapters of this part.

Gilson and Chenu, fellow medievalists, were coeditors of the *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du moyen âge*. Gilson and de Lubac were drawn together by a regard for one another's work and a shared dislike for Cardinal Cajetan. When Chenu's little book, *Une école de théologie*, was put on the Index, Gilson was furious and an anti-Roman animus took root in him, its principal object Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., under whom Chenu had studied at the Angelicum in Rome, and who had a keen eye for heterodoxy. De Lubac was severely criticized when his book *Surnaturel* appeared. The book conveyed his attitude toward what the Thomistic school, chiefly Cajetan, had done to what de Lubac understood to be Thomas's true doctrine. De Lubac was silenced by the Jesuits. Gilson had been an appreciative reader of de Lubac's book. Their correspondence became more frequent after the Vatican Council and their friendship ripened as each learned how deeply the other shared his distaste for Cajetan, the Thomistic school, and the Romans.

Chenu was a *peritus* at the Vatican Council, and so was de Lubac, and they were lionized as victims yet survivors of the narrow Scholasticism of the preconciliar Torquemadas. Thus became entrenched a negative attitude toward philosophy and the *praeambula fidei*. The direct influence of these three has doubtless faded, as all influences do,[3] but the lingering effects of their teaching are everywhere. There is a tendency to "theologize" St. Thomas in a manner reminiscent of Gilson and to suggest that Thomas cannot be understood, even on such matters as the moral virtues, by the mere philosopher.

In this part, I shall chiefly confront the arguments of these three men and by laying them to rest hope to diminish the widespread effect they have had on the question of the relation of philosophy and theology—all this in defense of a true understanding of the *praeambula fidei*.

3. It is melancholy to read de Labac's lament at the way in which, after his rehabilitation and subsequent elevation to cardinal, he was marginalized by the next generation of Jesuits.

Two ~ GILSON'S ATTACK ON CAJETAN

Commenting on a letter that Etienne Gilson had written in the early 1970s, Henri de Lubac remarked that the historian made him think of an elderly parishioner with eccentric ways.[1] The letters that de Lubac gathered together and then all but smothered in commentaries that carried on the cardinal's lifelong crusade against the *école thomiste* certainly give us an irascible octogenarian who, as he tells us, "does not like many people." Among the people he emphatically did not like was Thomas de Vio Cardinal Cajetan, the great sixteenth-century Dominican whose commentary is included in the Leonine edition of the *Summa theologiae*, something about which Gilson grumbled more than once. It is not too much to say that Gilson and de Lubac vie with one another to attack Cajetan. At times the Jesuit seems to have prodded the historian into epistolary excess, but the Gilsonian attempt to debunk Cajetan—we will be returning to de Lubac's efforts along that line—has a history of its own.

It begins in the 1950s when Gilson was ending his seventh decade and entering his eighth. Here are some of the chief published moments of the attack:

1. "Note sur un texte de Cajetan," *Antonianum* 27 (1952): 377–80.
2. "Cajetan et l'existence," *Tijdschriff voor Philosophie* 15 (1953): 267–86.

1. *Lettres de M. Etienne Gilson addressées au P. Henri De Lubac et commentées par celui-ci* (Paris, 1986), Letter 18, n. 3, p. 138: "Il est sans doute regrettable que, dans l'une ou l'autre de ses derniers écrits, Gilson ait mêlé à bien des réflexions fort pertinentes quelque traits ironiques faisant penser à un vieux paroissien dérangé dans ses habitudes, ce qui put donner prétexte à refuser de l'écouter. Il suffrait de ne plus pouvoir communiquer à coeur ouvert avec les représentants légitimes de son Eglise, tant le mythe de la 'nouvelle Eglise' obscurcissant la réealité jusque dans l'espirt de bien des pasteurs ou du moins influencait leur attitude et leur terminologie." The description of Gilson was thus prompted by the great historian's misgivings about the postconciliar Church but surely covers as well the matters with which I am concerned in this study, as his letters show.

3. "Note sur le revelabile d'après Cajetan," *Mediaeval Studies* 15 (1953): 199–206.

4. "Cajetan et l'humanisme theologique," AHDLMA 22 (1955): 113–36.

5. "Autour de Pomponazzi. Problématique de l'immortalité de l'âme en Italie au début du xvie siecle," AHDLMA 28 (1961): 163–279.

6. "Elements d'une métaphysique thomiste de l'être," AHDLMA (1973)

Doubtless there were friends of Gilson who wished, as he himself had in the case of the aged Claudel, that he would lose his pen and stop writing. Gilson's attack on Cajetan is part of what became a generalized attack on the Dominican Order, the great commentators, and the *école thomiste* as it existed both prior to and after Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris*.

Given the sweeping character of Gilson's attack, it is perhaps unsurprising to see him devote humorless pages to Cajetan's hyperbolic remark that Scotus opposed "each and every teaching of the Prima Pars." Taking the remark as literal, Gilson proceeds ploddingly to show that there were some teachings in the *Summa* that Scotus did not oppose. Part of Gilson's anti-Cajetanian campaign led to a temporary linking up with Franciscan forces, although this alliance was dropped when Gilson felt that the Scotists had grown strong enough.

In language reminiscent of the old Dominican-Franciscan exchange of *correctoria* and *corruptoria*, Gilson accuses Cardinal Cajetan of distorting the meaning of the texts he comments on. How did Gilson arrive at the view that Cajetan's commentary was the *corruptorium Thomae*? That is, what are the objective steps in the argument, quite apart from the animosities and annoyances we find in his letters and in his late published work?

"Note sur un texte de Cajetan"

This note recalls the review Gilson wrote of the critical edition of Scotus's *Ordinatio* for the *Bulletin Thomiste* (8 [1951]: 108ff.). Scotus's editors refer to a remark of Cajetan to the effect that Scotus had criticized nearly every word of the first part of Thomas's *Summa theologiae*—"singula prope hujus partis verba." But this, Gilson responds, is nonsense for anyone who ever read the work in any edition. Indeed, it is nonsense on its face because such a criticism, given the number of words in the *Summa*, would require a work far

larger than the *Ordinatio*. The remark attributed to Cajetan fills Gilson with incredulity. Nonetheless, he notes, Cajetan did say this. What exactly? Having noted that many others have criticized Thomas, Cajetan adds, "But John Scotus stands out from the others in this that he labored with copious subtlety and indeed tried to destroy nearly every word in this part."[2]

The reader of Gilson's note may experience an incredulity of another kind. Gilson proceeds as if he had never before encountered hyperbole. He says with a shock worthy of Claude Raines in *Casablanca* that Cajetan's remark is not only materially false, it is unlikely. As indeed it would be, if taken literally—even noticing, as Gilson does not, the *prope* (*nearly* every word). But does Gilson imagine that Cajetan meant his remark to be taken literally? He pretends to, in any case, and devotes several pages to expressing his shock, pages that are as painful to read as would be the analysis of a joke by someone without a sense of humor. Since no one would accuse Gilson himself of any lack of subtlety, let alone of a sense of humor, he must have a serious end in view. He does. This is the opening salvo in his wholesale attack on Cardinal Cajetan. His aim is to discredit Cajetan as a commentator; indeed, his rhetoric will eventually make Cajetan's remark about Scotus seem a model of understatement.

Gilson suggests that as a matter of fact Scotus wrote his theological masterpiece as if St. Thomas had never existed. Almost as if. Although Gilson ignores Cajetan's *prope*, we will not make him say more than he himself does. Now, if Scotus does not criticize Thomas's every word, we must ask, Gilson urges, how the cardinal could have been so misled. He finds the answer in Cajetan's "Preface," where the cardinal says that he will confront the critics of Thomas, especially Scotus ("... I have attempted to preserve the truth against attackers, especially Scotus").[3] Here is the beginning of an explanation: Cajetan takes Scotus as his chief adversary. What the remark on which Gilson is commenting tells us, therefore, is this: Cajetan attributes to Scotus an attitude toward Thomas that is exactly that which he adopts toward Scotus. This is Gilson's thesis. Because Cajetan has declared war on Scotus, he treats Scotus as if he had declared war on Thomas.

2. "Ioannes vero Scotus egregia praeter caeteros in hac re laboravit subtilitate et copia, quippe qui singula prope huius partis verba labefactare contendat."

3. "... contra oppugnatores, Scotumque praecipue, tueri veritatem contendi."

What might be said on Cajetan's behalf?

First, the text Gilson is quoting from is a dedicatory letter to Oliverius Carrafa, the cardinal protector of the Dominican Order, and it is written with the unction appropriate to the genre.

Second, has Gilson kept himself to the humorless and literal reading he pretends to give? Not quite. Several lines intervene between the phrase that has so shocked Gilson and that which he says Cajetan appends to it. *Because the doctrine of the First Part of the Summa is fundamental to everything that follows it.* This is why Thomists devote so much attention to it, and it is why theologians think they can make a name for themselves, both for genius and doctrine if, as generals attacking the enemy's strongest fortification, they bring their heaviest artillery to bear on this part of the *Summa*: "Nor have theologians failed to attack, thinking thus to acquire a name for genius or doctrine if, in the manner of generals who attack the most fortified point, they concentrate their fire on this part."[4] In this, Scotus is preeminent: and here occurs the phrase that arrested Gilson. What immediately follows is this: "By reason of intrinsic difficulty as well as the opposition mentioned, I have not made a simple exposition avoiding all controversy, bringing forth everything pertinent to a true understanding of St. Thomas, but where the text and matter seemed to require, I have introduced some questions by way of raising difficulties, and have sought to protect the truth against opponents, especially Scotus, in what became an arduous and difficult task, whether or not with happy results, I leave for others to decide."[5]

Third, assuming that Cajetan is soberly setting forth a literal thesis, namely, that Scotus criticizes each and every word of the Prima Pars, Gilson suggests that the thesis can be tested by looking at the commentary on the first article of the first question of the First Part. Both Scotus and Thomas ask if

4. "Theologi namque complures, neque adeo contemnendi, magnum sibi nomen ingenii ac doctrinae facturos hinc se esse putaverunt, si, veluti munitissimas arces fortissimi duces solent, ita illi partem hanc primam suis machinationibus oppugnarent."

5. "Ratione igitur habita et insitae difficultatis et oppugnationis illatae, non simplici quadam expositione sum usus, ut, sine ulla controversia, ea dumtaxat attulerim quae ad verum sancti Thomae intellectum pertinere putaverim; sed ubi locus et res ipsa postulare visi sunt, quaestiones ipse nonnullas dubitando attuli, et contra oppugnatores, Scotum praecipue, tueri veritatem contendi; arduum sane opus laboriosumque aggressus, quantum vero feliciter, aliorum sit iudicium."

it was necessary that a sacred teaching be revealed to men. Gilson assures us that there could be no disagreement between them on this point. How, then, can Scotus be taken to quarrel with every word of Thomas on a matter where their positions must be identical? Moreover Cajetan agrees! "Circa hanc partem, est advertendum quod Scotus, in I qu. Prologi Primi Sententiarum, nec a conclusione nec a ratione discordat." But Cajetan says more. To the phrase just quoted he adds: "sed a causa quare finis ille est nobis naturaliter occultus." What is the whole sentence? "With respect to this, it should be noted that Scotus does not—in the Prologue, q. 1 of *Sentences* I—disagree with either the conclusion or the reason for it, but with the reason why that end is naturally hidden from us." The end is naturally hidden from us because it is the supernatural end of our soul and no matter how perfectly we might know the nature of our soul with respect to its natural characteristics, it would not be known as ordered to that end, because both the end and that notion of soul are beyond the bounds of natural things. Is Cajetan right about this? "On the other hand, they are not in agreement on the reason why this ultimate end is unknown by man, and this time that is quite exact, the definition of the supernatural and even of 'nature' not being the same for the two theologians. But who says this? It is not Scotus, it is Cajetan and only he."[6] Q.E.D. Cajetan sees a Scotist departure where Scotus himself did not. But of course Gilson cannot mean that. He agrees with Cajetan that there is this difference between Thomas and Scotus. That this is a difference on a matter of importance, and of relevance to what is being discussed—Gilson does not go into that. He allows that Cajetan is free to bring such things into his commentary!

What this note shows is that a hyperbolic remark is hyperbolic.

Gilson advances the hypothesis—easily tested by the tenses of the text—that the "Preface" was written after the commentary. In the commentary, Cajetan has opposed Scotus on virtually every point of doctrine: "At this moment, he has come to oppose Duns Scotus to Thomas Aquinas on practically every point where their positions are not the same."[7] He is full of his subject.

6. "En revanche, ils ne s'accordent pas sur la cause pour laquelle cette fin dernière est inconnu de l'homme, ce qui est tout à fait exact cette fois, la definition du surnaturel, et même la notion de 'nature' n'étant pas la même chez les deux theologiens. Mais qui le dit? Ce n'est pas Duns Scot, c'est Cajetan, et lui seul" (379).

7. "A ce moment, il venait d'opposer Duns Scot à Thomas d'Aquin pratiquement sur chacun des points où leurs positions ne sont pas les mêmes."

He has been engaged in hand-to-hand combat with Scotus, and has come to think that it was Scotus who started the fight, not himself. There are Scotists, Gilson allows, who do oppose Thomas on every point, but Scotus himself does not.

There is then this psychological explanation of Cajetan's excessive expression of Scotus versus Thomas. It is a purely and simply a fable that Scotus criticized every word in the Prima Pars.

This conclusion shows the limitations of discussing matters on the level Gilson has chosen. The net effect of calling Cajetan's hyperbolic remark a fable is to suggest that the oppositions the great cardinal sees between the thought of Thomas Aquinas and that of Duns Scotus are themselves fabulous, imaginary, invented. But Gilson, on the test case, allows that Cajetan is quite right in seeing a difference between Thomas and Scotus on the supernatural. Nonetheless, in the light of the continuing attack on Cajetan, and Gilson's eventual alliance with Henri de Lubac, one wonders if the whole point of this little note was not to cast doubt on the doctrine of the supernatural.

Cajetan and Existence

It is Gilson's view that, while no one can doubt that Cajetan admitted the real distinction between existence and essence, he does not seem to have understood its role in Thomas, its centrality. Cajetan does not seem to realize that *esse* has taken on a *sens nouveau* with Thomas. What is that new sense? "*. . . ipum esse est perfectissimum omnium*" and "*ipsum esse est actualitas omnium rerum, et etiam formarum. . . .*" He draws our attention to Cajetan's commentary on *ST* Ia.4.1 ad 3m. The assumption is that this is the place that will tell us whether Cajetan understands *esse* in the way Thomas does. Gilson assures us that he has no objection to what Cajetan says, only to what he does not say. What is the objection?

Thomas is asking in Question 4 about God's perfection. The article asks whether God is perfect. In the body of the article Thomas notes that those ancient philosophers who concentrated on the material cause cut themselves off from a realization of the divine perfection, because God is the first principle in the genus of efficient, not of material, cause. As matter is in potency,

so the agent is in act and the first efficient principle must be supremely in act or actual ("oportet maxime esse in actu et per consequens maxime esse perfectum").

Thomas considers the following objections to his thesis that God is perfect:

1. "Perfect" means something completely made—*per-factum*. But God isn't made. Therefore, etc. Thomas agrees that the term cannot mean this when God is said to be perfect, but points out that when things that are made are complete they are actual—*tunc dicitur esse aliquid perfectum*. It is that note that is kept when the term is extended analogically to actual things that have not come to be as the result of a change.

2. God is the beginning of all things; but beginnings are imperfect, not perfect. Therefore God is not perfect. In reply Thomas says that this is true of the material principle, which is in potency. But in order for it to come to be actual, there must already be something actual. In short, efficient causality is again the key to the answer.

3. The third objection is this: "It was shown above that God's essence is his *esse*. But existence seems to be most imperfect, since it is most common and receptive of all additions. Therefore God is imperfect."

Thomas replies by saying that existence as such is the most perfect thing of all since it compares to everything as act. Nothing has actuality save insofar as it exists, so existence itself is the actuality of all things, even of their forms. Hence it does not relate to them as receiver to received, but rather as received to receiver. When I speak of man's existence, or a horse's or anything else's, existence is taken as formal and as received and not as that to which existence belongs.

Cajetan devotes the last dozen lines of his commentary on this article to this third objection. What does he have to say?

> With respect to the response to the third objection, note two things. First, that the response reposes on this distinction: "common" is twofold, in the manner of act and in the manner of potency. Community in the manner of act consists in being received; community in the manner of potency consists in receiving. But existence is most common in the manner of act because it relates to everything as the received to the receiver, as is clear. Second, from this appears the defect in Scotus's argument in his commentary on IV *Sentences*, distinction 1, question 1, against this position of St. Thomas, namely, that *esse*, taken in its formal notion, is the most perfect of all perfections, ar-

guing from its community. It is to be wondered that he brings forth this argument to conclude that which Thomas has resolved so clearly.[8]

Gilson finds this defective. How? It is true enough that *esse* is not common in the manner of potency, but rather in that of act. But this is not to explain what Thomas says. "St. Thomas in his response is not content to attribute a community of act (and not simply of indetermination) to *esse*; he attributes to this act a proper perfection, defined in a unique manner, by defining it as the act of whatever is, including forms themselves."[9]

Cajetan is writing a commentary on a work whose order has ever been the object of amazement and admiration. Any worthwhile commentary on the *Summa theologiae* should reveal that order. Thomas so wrote as to avoid needless repetitions, to state things in such an order that later inquiries could benefit from the precision of earlier ones. The third objection in Article 1 of Question 4 itself notes that it has been shown earlier *(ostensum est supra)* that *ipsum esse* is most perfect—that is, in Article 4 of Question 3. If Gilson were truly interested in what Cajetan has to say about that doctrine, when it is first introduced, surely he would refer to the text in which the commentator deals formally with it. But any such reference is notably absent from Gilson's criticism.

Could his criticism apply to Cajetan's commentary on Article 4 of Question 3, the text presupposed by the one that Gilson has chosen as a key text?

In Question 3 Thomas is beginning the lengthy undertaking of discovering what God is not. "Once we know whether a thing is, there remains to ask how it exists in order to know of it what it is. But since we cannot know of God what he is, but only what he is not, we cannot consider how he is but

8. "V. In responsione ad tertium adverte duo. *Primo*, quod responsio stat in hac distinctione: *commune* dupliciter, per modum actus et per modum potentiae. Communitas per modum actus, consistit in *recipi*: communitas per modum potentiae, consistit in *recipere*. Esse autem est communissumum per modum actus: quia ad omnia comparatur ut receptum ad receptiva, ut patet.—*Secundo*, quod hinc patet defectus Scoti, in IV Sent., dist. 1, q. 1, contra hanc s. Thomae positionem, scilicet quod esse, secundum suam formalem rationem, est perfectissima omnium perrfectionum, arguentis ex communitate ipsius. Mirum est enim quod hanc rationem affert ad concludendum, quam expresses. Thomas solverat tam clare."

9. "La reponse de saint Thomas ne se contente pas d'attribuer à l'esse une communauté d'acte (et non point seulement d'indétermination), elle attribue à cet acte une perfection propre, definie à sa manière unique, en le definissant comme l'acte de tout ce qui est, y compris les formes mêmes" (268).

rather how he is not."[10] The discussion of the divine simplicity, in Question 3, sets the stage for the discussion of the divine attributes. In a sequence of articles, Thomas removes from God various characteristics of creatures. God is not a body; there is no composition of matter and form in him; there is in him no composition of quiddity (essence, nature) and subject; there is no composition of essence and *esse* in him; there is no composition of genus and difference in him, nor of subject and accident. This suite of negations leads to the denial of all internal composition in God. The denial of all created modes of complexity is the basis for recognizing God's simplicity.

Obviously the ideal way to approach Article 4 of Question 3 would be by way of reading the preceding two articles of the question where it is shown why God is not a body and that God is identical with his nature or essence. Given Thomas's procedure, this will come down to denying that there is in God a composition that is characteristic of corporeal creatures. The affirmation derived from this negation faces two difficulties.

First, nothing can be in itself, so if God's essence or nature, deity, is in him, he cannot be identical with his nature.

Second, effects are like their causes, but in created things supposit and nature are not identical: this man is not identical with humanity. So how can God be identical with deity?

The scriptural passage that turns the discussion in the direction of the thesis to be maintained is John 14:6. Just as Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, so God is deity.

God is identical with his nature or essence. The case for this can be made by recalling that in things composed of matter and form, the individual and nature must differ. The essence includes only that which is expressed in the thing's definition—for example, by "humanity" is meant that which is given in the definition of man. It is thanks to this that a man is a man. Individual matter and all the accidents individuating it are not mentioned in the definition of the species; this flesh and these bones are not part of the definition of the species any more than white or black and the like. This flesh and these bones designating this matter are not included in humanity. But they

10. "Cognito de aliquo an sit, inquirendum restat quomodo sit, ut sciatur de eo quid sit. Sed quia de Deo scire non possumus quid sit, sed quid non sit, non possumus considerare de Deo quodmodo sit, sed potius quodmodo non sit" (prologue to q. 3).

are parts of the thing that is man which is why there are things true of this man that are not true of him because of his nature, or humanity. This is what is meant by saying that man and humanity are not identical. Indeed, humanity expresses the formal part of man—that is, the defining principles relate as form to individuating matter.

That is the crucial first step in the argument: to remind ourselves of the fact that material individuals are not identical with their natures. Aristotle devoted Book VII of the *Metaphysics* to a discussion of this, quarreling with Plato and fashioning the account that Thomas is invoking here. The article involves a *modus ponens*: if *p*, then *q*. If a thing is composed of matter and form, there is distinction and not identity of individual and nature. Conversely, if *–p*, then *–q*. In God there is no composition of matter and form (this was the burden of Article 2), therefore there is no distinction between God and his nature: in God individual and nature are identical.

As for the first difficulty, Thomas makes the important point that the only language we have is fashioned to speak of the things that are the proper objects of our mind, namely, sensible things. They are complex and many, and our language exhibits this. From a linguistic point of view, we will always seem to be predicating complexity of God, but care is taken to draw attention to this and to warn against misunderstanding. The concrete term 'man' signifies differently from the abstract term 'humanity': the concrete term signifies the thing that is or subsists, the abstract term signifies that by which it is or subsists. Humanity is that by which a man is a man; whiteness is that by which a white thing is white. This is not breakthrough ontology, but an observation about our language and indirectly about the things of which we speak. Against this background we are likely to think, wrongly, that 'deity' and 'God' have different meanings in the sense of different referents as well as different linguistic roles. This is an enormously important point and it is a further indication of the obliquity and negativity of our knowledge of God. We cannot know him as he is, but only as he is not. Creatures are like him in some way and thus should provide some access to him. And they do. But the stress now is on the access they give when we see that their cause cannot share certain characteristics with them. He cannot be a body; he cannot be composed of matter and form; there is no distinction in him between individual and nature. But the very expression of these denials makes use of terms that

seem to attribute complexity to God. Our only recourse is to note this and not let our language undermine what we are using our language to say.

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The next step is to argue that in God essence and *esse* are identical. The difficulties in the way of this assertion are:

First, if this were so, nothing could be added to the divine existence; but the existence to which nothing can be added is the common existence predicated of all things, and it would seem to follow that God is that common being said of all things. But this is ruled out by Wisdom 14:21 where God's name is said to be incommunicable. So it looks as if essence and existence are not identical in God.

Second, the question "Does he exist?" referred to God can be answered affirmatively, but not the question "What is he?" Therefore his essence and *esse* cannot be identical.

On the contrary, St. Hilary has assured us that in God "*esse* is not incidental but subsisting truth." So what subsists in God is identical with his existence.

Now for the argument. The procedure, again, is to take a complexity that is obvious in creatures and deny that it is found in God. There are many ways in which it can be shown that the distinction of essence and *esse* in creatures is not be be found in God.

First, whatever is in a thing but not of its essence must be caused and explained either by the principles of the essence, as properties like risible derive from man's essential principles, or from something exterior, as the heat of water is caused by fire. If, then, the existence of a thing is other than its essence, it must be caused either by something external or by the essential principles of the thing. But a thing's existence could not be caused by the essential principles of the thing alone, since no caused thing is a sufficient cause of its own being. So, where existence is not identical with essence, existence must be caused by another. But this cannot be said of God who is the first efficient cause. So it is impossible that in God his essence should be one thing and his existence another.

Second, existence is the actuality of every form or nature, so goodness or humanity are not signified as in act or actual unless we signify that they exist. That is why existence is related to the essence that is not identical with it as

act to potency. But there is nothing potential in God (as was argued in Article 1), so in him essence and existence do not differ but are identical.

Third, that which is hot but is not as such heat is hot by way of participation; so too that which has existence but is not existence is being by way of participation. But God is identical with his essence (Article 3). If then he were not his existence, he would exist by participation, not essentially. But then he would not be the first being, which is absurd. Therefore God is his existence and not just his essence.

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Ad 1m. The first difficulty is handled by distinguishing two meanings of "that to which nothing can be added," one that explicitly excludes further addition, another that does not mention what nonetheless may be included. The first applies to God, the second to the "being" which is predicably common to all things.

Ad 2m. The second difficulty calls for a distinction of meanings of *esse*. Sometimes the infinitive signifies the act of being *(actus essendi);* sometimes it signifies the composition in a proposition that the mind effects when it conjoins predicate to subject. In its first sense, we cannot know the existence of God any more than we can know the essence identical with it; in the second sense of *esse* we can know the existence of God insofar as we can know that the affirmation "God exists" is true, and this we know from his effects.

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Thus far St. Thomas. In his commentary, Cajetan begins as he often does by remarking on the title of the article: *Utrum in Deo sit idem essentia et esse*. As the sequel makes clear, by essence we can understand deity and by *esse* that which is signified by "*esse secundum adiacens*"—for example, when we say "God is" or "Man is." The identity inquired after is real identity. Thus the question asked can be paraphrased as: Is the thing signified by 'God' the thing signified by 'is' when we say "God is"?

Cajetan remarks that this is a most subtle question, less familiar to moderns than it was to the metaphysicians of antiquity. Nowadays people will say that not only in God, but in everything else, existence and essence are identical.

Cajetan characterizes the three proofs given in the text as proceeding re-

spectively from God as first efficient cause, God as pure act, and God as first being. This is the way he restates the second argument.

> Second. God is pure act, therefore his essence does not relate to existence as potency to act. Accordingly, he is his existence.—The antecedent is evident, and the first consequence is known from the meaning of the terms. The second is proved thus. Existence is the actuality of every form or nature; therefore every nature distinct from existence relates to it as potency to act. Therefore, if it does not relate to it as potency, it is its own existence. What was assumed is thus proved: nothing is signified as actual (in act) if it is not signified as existing.
>
> Notice that the argument is based on this, that any quiddity or nature, however actual it might be according to its quidditative notion, as related to existence has the note of potency. For wisdom and goodness and so forth are actuated by what I call *exists*, and so too humanity, equinity, and so forth. Moreover it is said that existence is the actuality of every form and that no nature is signified in ultimate act except insofar as it is signified as actually exercising existence.[11]

We do not know if Gilson found anything wanting in Cajetan's commentary on the text in which Thomas is arguing formally for the nondistinction of essence and existence in God. Gilson chose to ignore it and to concentrate on a later text that presupposes the earlier one where the distinction that interests him is treated *formaliter*. The great commentator's remarks on Question 4, Article 1, ad 3m, are in continuity with what has gone before. Gilson's dismissal of the invocation of the different ways in which *esse* is common prevents him from seeing how Cajetan is relating this later discussion to the earlier one where precisely that distinction occurs first. To say that Cajetan does not go on about *esse* as the actuality of all things, even of forms, overlooks the fact that he has discussed this unexceptionably when it first came up, and here he is trying to help us understand the passage as a response to an objection. Would we ever guess, Gilson asks, what Thomas has said in

11. "III. *Secundo*. Deus est actus purus: ergo essentia eius non se habet ad esse ut potentia ad actum: ergo est suum esse.—Antecedens patet. Et prima consequentia est nota ex terminis. Secunda probatur. Esse est actualitas omnis formae seu naturae: ergo omnis natura distincta ab esse, comparatur ad ipsum ut potentia ad actum; ergo, si non comparatur ut potentia, est ipsum esse. Assumptum probatur: quia nulla res significatur in actu, nisi signifcatur ut *est*.

Adverte hic quod ista ratio fundatur super hoc, quod quaecumque quidditas vel natura, quantumcumque secundum rationem quidditativum sit actualis, relata tamen ad esse, habet rationem potentiae: sapientia namque, et bonitas, etc., actuatur per hoc quod dico *est*; et similiter humanitas, et equinitas, etc. Et proptera dicitur et quod esse est actualitas omnis formae; et quod nulla natura significatur in actu ultimato, nisi prout significatur esse in actu exercito."

Ia, q. 4, 1, 3m, if the text were lost and only Cajetan's commentary survived? Of course we could. We might find it difficult to reconstruct an article in Question 3 from one in Question 4, but that would not establish a defect in the commentary, only exhibit a failure to appreciate the order of the *Summa theologiae*.

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It might be noted that Gilson seems to share the view of the moderns[12] Cajetan mentions rather than that of the metaphysicans of antiquity, at least to this degree that he thinks the issue is chiefly one of the way in which created *esse* relates to created essence. But the procedure of Question 3 is to take something *unproblematical* in creatures and deny it of God. In commenting on Boethius, for whom *diversum est esse et id quod est* is an axiom, that is, is self-evident, Thomas has learned that the problem is to show that in God alone this distinction *does not* obtain. By making the problem seem more one of created *esse* than of divine, Gilson diverts his reader from the contextual sense of the passage he has plucked from the *Summa*. Surely if we had only his account, we would have a very imperfect grasp of what Thomas is up to in Question 4, let alone the preceding questions of the Prima Pars.

Gilson's complaint about the passage of Cajetan just cited is, then, that he does not take the occasion to repeat here what he has explained earlier when Thomas says that *esse* is the actuality of all things, even of forms. Gilson asserts that this is a novelty, unknown by Aristotle, nor is that merely a casual aside. Gilson's attack on Cajetan is one aspect of his criticism of Aristotle. The reader is permitted to suspect that any supposed deficiency on Cajetan's part is such only when the great commentator is seen from the angle of Gilson's increasingly inventive interpretations of *esse*. Cajetan might very well speak of *esse* differently than Gilson, but for all that be in perfect agreement with Thomas Aquinas. It is the Thomisticity of Gilson's own views that must eventually be subjected to scrutiny.

In "Cajetan et l'existence," a marvel of innuendo and rhetoric in the pejorative sense, Gilson skips around in the writings of Cajetan to find passages that raise the "admittedly unlikely" question as to whether Cajetan has re-

12. The Leonine editors refer us to Cajetan's commentary on the *De ente et essentia*, Chapter 5, Question 11, for further discussion of the general claim that in all things other than God essence and *esse* differ.

ally understood what Thomas means by *esse* (273). The next passage is taken from Ia, 90, 2, ad 1m. Gilson admonishes Cajetan for overlooking Thomas's response ("demasquant," Gilson dramatically comments, "comme il le fait parfois ses dernieres batteries" [unveiling, as he sometimes does, his ultimate weapons]; 269):

> . . . it should be said that in the soul its simple essence is as material, and its participated existence as formal: but this is necessarily simultaneous with the essence of soul, because *esse* follows per se on form.[13]

There can be no doubt, Gilson remarks, that Thomas is speaking here of "*l'acte d'être*." No, there cannot. Is Cajetan supposed to be unaware of this? Cajetan explains that exists *(est)* and becomes *(fit)* are truly and properly predicated only of subsistent things. He would have us think, Gilson remarks, in apparent amazement, that the human soul truly and properly is and comes to be because it subsists. Of course there is nothing wrong with that—we can add that it fits in wonderfully with the text and context—but Gilson is nonetheless dissatisfied. What Cajetan says is true, but it is only Aristotle. What more is needed? "Useless to insist on it: a Thomist substance can be the term of a generation, that which it is, only because it has its proper act of existing. This is a most important point. He who forgets it by that very fact exposes himself to many difficulties when he would prove the immortality of the soul, at least such as Saint Thomas demonstrated it."[14] Since the immortality of the soul was discussed fifteen questions before Question 90, we might expect Gilson to turn to that discussion to show us what he means. But it is by now painfully clear that he is out to make a case against Cajetan and fairness to the great commentator will not characterize his criticisms. We will reserve for later a discussion of Gilson's account of proofs for the immortality of the soul—to the degree that he thinks any such proof is necessary. For now, consider what he stresses: a substance as Thomas understands it can only be the term of generation, as it is, because it has its own act of existing. This is close

13. ". . . dicendum quod in anima est sicut materiale ipsa simplex essentia, formale autem in ipsa est esse participatum: quod quid ex necessitate simul est cum essentia animae, quia esse per se consequitur ad formam."

14. "Inutile d'insister: une substance thomiste ne peut être le terme d'une generation, ce qu'elle est, que parce qu'elle a son propre acte d'exister. Ce point est fort important. Qui l'oublierait s'exposerait par la même à bien des difficulties au moment de prouver l'immortalité de l'ame, telle de moins que la demontre saint Thomas."

to being, if it is not, a tautology. That which comes to be comes to be. Being is the term of a generation; that which is generated exists thanks to that process of generation. Surely Gilson does not mean to suggest that something is generated and *then* receives an act of existence. Or is he perhaps suggesting that existent things are not the terms of generation for Aristotle?

Soul.—After this strange treatment of Cajetan, Gilson next turns to Ia, q. 90, article 2, ad 1m. Thomas is addressing the objection that the soul is not produced by creation rather than generation because, not being pure act, there must be something material whose act it is. This would make it generation rather than creation, generation presupposing something that the objector identifies with matter. From the foregoing, it is of course impossible that the soul be pure act: only God is that. On the other hand, soul is a form, not a compound of matter and form. The objector's point is well taken, save for the fact that he identifies potency and matter. In the case of the soul, the essence of soul is as it were material and its participated existence is formal. If one did posit a kind of matter in the soul, it would be like that of the heavenly bodies, in potency to one form alone.[15] Gilson introduces this straightforward resolution with heightened rhetoric: "To which Thomas replies, unveiling as he sometimes does his ultimate weapons, that that which in the soul is material is the simple essence itself, and what is formal in it is participated *esse*. This *esse*, he adds, is necessarily simultaneous with the essence of the soul, because *esse* accompanies the soul per se. No doubt is possible, it is indeed the act of being that is here in question. One more good occasion, for a commentator confronting the very basis of the doctrine, to stress its metaphysical bearing."[16] Having thus stated his own expectations, Gilson asks what Cajetan does. The answer: Nothing.

15. ". . . dicendum quod in anima est sicut materiale ipsa simplex essentia, formale autem in ipsa est esse participatum: quod quidem ex necessitate simul est cum essentia animae, quia esse per se consequitur formam.—Et eadem ratio esset, si poneretur composita ex quadam materia spirituali, ut quidam dicunt. Quia illa materia non est in potentia ad aliam formam, sicut nec materia caelestis corporis: alioquin anima esset corruptibilis. Unde nullo modo anima potest fieri ex materia praiacente."

16. "A quoi Thomas répond, démasquant comme il le fait parfois ses dernières batteries, que ce qu'il y a dans l'âme qui soit matériel, c'est l'essence simple elle-même, et que le formel en elle, c'est l'*esse* particpé. Cette *esse* ajoute-t-il, est nécessairement simultané avec l'essence de l'âme, parce que *esse* accompagne par soi la forme. Aucun doute n'est possible, c'est bien de l'acte d'être qu'il est ici question. Belle occasion encore, pour un commentateur qui se trouve en face de fond même de la doctrine, d'en souligner la portée métaphysique" (269).

What precisely is the charge? That Cajetan did not wax eloquent here as Gilson is inclined to do? But there is a suggestion of something more. Cajetan, we are told, is indifferent to this fundamental notion. Worse, "all his argumentation is from the point of view of substance." This is enlarged to the claim that Cajetan is far more interested in Aristotle than in Thomas. Did Cajetan perhaps say something objectionable in his commentary? "Once more, what Cajetan says is true, but it is only Aristotle" ("Une fois encore, ce que dit Cajetan est vrai, mais ce n'est que de l'Aristote"; 270). This takes us to the heart of Gilson's developing position. There has been a growing animus against Aristotle, reaching its peak in *Being and Some Philosophers*. While Gilson will often say that what Thomas teaches includes but goes beyond Aristotle, he will also so describe Aristotle that Thomas could not coherently have adopted his thought.[17] Since Gilson clearly regards this text and Cajetan's commentary on it as supporting his eventual claim that Cajetan has been an impediment rather than a help to understanding Thomas, we must (1) consider the text of Thomas, (2) then consider the very extensive commentary by Cajetan, and (3) finally consider Gilson's assessment of that commentary.

a. *Summa theologiae*, Ia.90.2.1m

This text occurs in the so-called Treatise on Man, which begins with Question 75, and precisely with a discussion of the soul, Article 4 asking whether soul is composed of matter and form. Unlike the souls of the brutes, the human soul is said to be subsistent (Article 2). The discussion of soul and of its relation to body continues, followed by a discussion of the faculties of the soul with particular reference to will and intellect. Intellectual knowledge receives extended treatment.[18] When Thomas finally arrives at Question 90, he begins a discussion that will occupy four questions concerning the pro-

17. See my "Do Aristotelian Substances Exist?," *Sapientiae* 54 (1999): 325–38.

18. Q. 75, on the essence of the soul; q. 76, on the union of soul and body; q. 77, on the powers of soul in general; q. 78, on the powers of soul in particular; q. 79, on intellective powers; q. 80, on appetitive powers generally; q. 81, on sensuality; q. 82, on the will; q. 83, on free will; q. 84, how soul conjoined to body understands bodily things beneath it; q. 85, on the mode and order of knowledge; q. 86, what our intellect understands of material things; q. 87, how intellect knows itself and the things in it; q. 88, how the human soul knows things above itself; q. 89, how the separated soul knows. Only after these various discussions on aspects of the soul does Thomas ask, in q. 90, on the first production of man with regard to soul. This treatise continues through q. 102.

duction of man. Given this vast context, it seems odd to select the answer to an objection so far along in the discussion and suggest that what one says about it will tell us what he makes of Thomas's teaching on the soul.

Article 1 asks whether the soul is made or is of the very substance of God. That God is pure act provides the argumentative means for dismissing the possibility that soul is of the substance of God. Objection 2 of Article 1 is this: the soul is a simple form, for a form is act, therefore the soul is pure act, which is what God is; therefore the soul is of the substance of God. In replying, Thomas says that while soul is a simple form in its essence, it is not its existence, but rather a being by participation, *as is clear from the foregoing*. The editors refer us to Question 75, Article 5, ad 4., but at this point of the *Summa* such references are a commonplace. Thus it is all the more arbitrary to take a late text, which presupposes so much, as if it provided a prime occasion to discuss its presuppositions.

Article 2 asks if the soul is produced by way of creation. The first objection is that whatever has something material in it comes to be from matter; but the soul has something material in it, since it is not pure act; therefore the soul has been made from matter and is not created. The second objection holds that the act of any matter seems to be educed from the potency of matter, since matter is in potency to act and every act exists in potency in matter. But the soul is the act of corporeal matter, as is clear from its definition. Therefore the soul is educed from the potency of matter. Third, soul is a form; if therefore the soul comes to be by way of creation, all other forms must also come to be in that way and then no form would come into existence through generation, which is absurd.

Having invoked Genesis 1:27, "God created man according to his image," and observing that it is thanks to soul that man bears that image, Thomas concludes that the soul came into existence through creation.

Respondeo dicendum quod anima rationalis non potest fieri nisi per creationem: quod non est verum de aliis formis. Cuius ratio est quia, cum fieri sit via ad esse, hoc modo alicui competit fieri, sicut ei competit esse. Illud autem proprie di-

I reply that it should be said that the rational soul can only come to be by creation, something not true of other forms. The reason for this is that, since becoming is the way to existence, the manner of a thing's coming to be will accord with its manner of existing. That

citur esse, quod ipsum habet esse, quasi in suo esse subsistentes: unde solae substantiae proprie et vere dicuntur entia. Accidens vero non habet esse, sed eo aliquid est, et hac ratione ens dicitur; sicut albedo dicitur ens, quia ea aliquid est album. Et propter hoc dicitur in VII Metaphys., quod accidens dicitur *magis entis quam ens*. Et eadem ratio est de omnibus aliis formis non subsistentibus. Et ideo nulli formae non subsistenti proprie competit fieri, sed dicuntur fieri per hoc quod composita subsistentia fiunt.—Anima autem rationalis est forma subsistens, ut supra habitum est (q. 75, a. 2). Unde sibi proprie competit esse et fieri. Et quia non potest fieri ex materia praeiacente, neque corporali, quia sic esset naturae corporeae; neque spirituali, quia sic substantiae spirituales in invicem transmuterentur: necesse est dicere quod non fiat nisi per creationem.

is properly said to be which itself has existence, as it were subsisting in its own existence, so only substances are truly and properly called beings. The accident does not have existence, but something is because of it, which is the basis for calling it being; for example, whiteness is called being because something is white thanks to it. So in *Metaphysics* VII it is said that accident is "*of* a being rather than itself being." The same holds true of all nonsubsistent forms. So becoming does not belong properly to any nonsubsistent form; they are said to become because subsistent compounds come to be.—The rational soul is a subsistent form, as we have seen, hence to be and to become belong to it properly, and since it can not come to be from some preexistent matter, whether corporeal (for then it would be of a corporeal nature), or spiritual, since then spiritual substances could change into one another, we must say that it can only come to be through creation.

This is the text, and context, in which the response to the first objection is taken by Gilson to be the very touchstone of Thomisticity.

b. Cajetan's Commentary

Noting that the question is clear enough, Cajetan observes that a single affirmative response to the question is given in the body of the article: the rational soul, alone among sensible forms, necessarily comes to be by creation. Proof? Only the rational soul is subsistent, therefore it alone (among forms) properly has existence and therefore properly comes to be.

Cajetan refers his reader to the earlier discussion in Question 75 for the proof that only the human soul is a subsistent form, a reference that underscores the fact that the *Summa* is an orderly work in which subsequent discussions depend on earlier ones. Were one to wish to pursue the claim that

the human soul is subsistent, he would turn to those earlier discussions as the appropriate place to do so. Anyone wondering how Cajetan understands St. Thomas on this matter will find an enormous commentary on Question 75, Article 2 that asks if the human soul is something subsistent. Here in Question 90, he explains what Thomas means by saying that only substances are primarily being, accidents being rather of being than beings in their own right, since they inhere in substances. Aristotle is an authority for this, in Cajetan's commentary *as in the text being commented on*. Only what subsists is and comes to be as such. Generally speaking, forms neither exist nor come to be as such, but that is because they are not subsistent. The soul is subsistent, so being and becoming pertain properly to it. Cajetan goes on to paraphrase the rest of the text, denying that matter is a component of subsistent forms.

In the second paragraph of his commentary, Cajetan notes that when Thomas restricts *esse* and *fieri* to subsistent things, he is speaking of being and becoming absolutely, without addition. Because it is subsistent, the human soul is and comes to be properly as such. Other forms are not subsistent, are not what *(quod)* exists, but that whereby something *(quo)* is such and such. Does the fact that the human soul is a *quo*, that whereby man lives, pose a problem? Cajetan thinks not, since the rational soul is both *quod* and *quo*, not just *quo* alone. Cajetan cites a remark of Averroes to the effect that the only way Aristotle avoided holding the creation of forms was by denying that they come to be as such. As a rule, forms can be said to come to be only insofar as the composites of which they are the form come to be. "Therefore Saint Thomas subtly proceeds from the same foundation, proving that the human soul truly and properly is and becomes because it subsists."

In paragraph III he takes up a remark of Scotus to the effect that creation can be understood in two ways, first for the making of something without presuming any matter, and this is the proper sense. Second, for the making of a thing in some preexistent subject, not as being educed from its potency, but from without, and that is how they say souls are created. This may not be false, but it is crude and obfuscating, and bespeaks an ignorance of the nature of creation and of natural generation. Albert the Great had described creation as *ex nihilo sui fieri* and natural generation as *ex aliquo sui fieri*. Only subsistent things come to be, not material forms or accidents. Cajetan admires Thomas's procedure since it enables him to reject spiritual matter, for

then, in Albert's phrase, subsistent forms would come *ex aliquo sui*. Cajetan notes that this is peripatetic doctrine and the chief basis for Aristotle, echoing the reference to *Metaphysics* VII in the text.

Cajetan does not discuss the answer to the first objection, all of whose elements have already been clarified. He spends the rest of his relatively brief commentary discussing the notion of being educed from the potency of matter that figures in the second objection.

c. Gilson on This Commentary

We have seen that Gilson gives pride of place to the answer to the first objection as a text where Thomas draws on his ultimate resources. What are they? In the soul its essence is as it were material and its participated existence as formal. Moreover, *esse* is necessarily *simul* with the essence of the soul. No doubt about it, Thomas is speaking of the *acte d'être*, Gilson observes, and, since he holds this to be the most profound teaching of Thomas *(le fond même de la doctrine),* anyone interested in Thomas's teaching must dwell on this. But Cajetan says nothing in his commentary about the answer to the first objection. The implication is that he is disinterested in or ignorant of the teaching of Thomas.

And what of what Cajetan did say in his commentary?, Gilson asks. Cajetan leaves *esse* in the dark in what he says about the body of the article. From the commentary we would not be able to reconstruct the text because the emphasis in Cajetan is all on the side of substance. It is not easy to respond to criticisms of what has not been said, but Gilson's remarks about what Cajetan did say are exceedingly strange. How is it that Cajetan misleads? "The sense is that *is* and *comes to be* are truly and properly said of subsistent things alone, because they are the only things to which *esse* belongs *ut quid*. According to him, Thomas intends to say that the rational soul 'truly and properly *is* and *comes to be* because it subsists.'"[19] But surely that is just what the text has told us. True enough, Gilson says, but this is only Aristotle. Well, it is certainly Aristotle, and Aristotle was invoked by Thomas to establish this point. Our curiosity grows as to what Gilson himself takes Thomas to mean.

19. "Le sens est que *est* et *fit* ne se prédiquent vraiment et properment que des seul subsistants, parce qu'ils sont les seuls auquels *esse* convient *ut quid*.' Pour lui, Thomas entend dire que l'âme raisonable 'vere et proprie est et fit, quia subsistit.'"

Thomistic substance is indeed the term of generation, but it is also something else and, to speak truly, completely something else. The body of the article says it for one who really wants to understand. For an interested commentator, what magnificent density in this formulation: *That is properly said to be, which has existence as subsisting in its existence; that is why only substances are properly and truly called beings.* No need to insist on it: a Thomistic substance can be the term of a generation, what it is, only because it has its own act of existing. The point is most important. He who forgets it exposes himself to many difficulties when it comes time to prove the immortality of the soul, at least as Saint Thomas demonstrates it.[20]

Substance as St. Thomas understands it is indeed the term of a generation, but it is something else too, indeed something quite different. What? A substance can be the term of a generation because it has its own proper act of existence. Is that the kernel of Gilson's somewhat vatic remarks? It is true, as Thomas says in the text, citing Aristotle, and as Cajetan notes in his commentary, that becoming belongs per se to substance just as existence does. True enough, Gilson says, but there is more. A substance can be the term of a generation because it has its own proper act of existence. This is said to be something more and quite different from saying that substance is the term of generation. We are being offered a tautology. The term of a generation is a substance to which existence, like becoming, belongs properly and as such. True enough, Gilson says, but this is only because existence belongs truly and properly to substance!

Gilson takes particular umbrage at Cajetan's pointing out the Aristotelian provenance of the doctrine of this text, but this is explicit in the text itself. To suggest that taking note of this exhibits a desire to explain Aristotle rather than Thomas is disingenuous. This complaint must be directed against Thomas himself in the body of the article. It is clear that Gilson sees more than a development of Aristotle in Thomas. He wants both the Aristotelian

20. "La substance thomiste est bien le terme de la génération, mais elle est en outre autre chose, et, à vrai dire, tout autre chose. Le corps de l'article le dit à qui veut bien l'entendre. Pour un commentateur intéressé, quelle magnifique densité métaphysique dans cette formule: *Illud autem proprie dicitur esse, quod ipsum habet esse quasi in suo esse subsistens; unde solae substantiae proprie et vere dicuntur entia.* Inutile d'insister: une substance thomiste ne peut être le terme d'une génération, ce qu'elle est, que parce qu'elle a son propre acte d'exister. Ce point est fort important. Qui l'oublierait s'exposerait par là même a bien des difficultés au moment de prouver l'immortalité de l'âme, telle de même que le démontre saint Thomas" ("Cajetan et l'existence," 270).

component and the claim that the Thomisitic addition completely alters what it adds to. He decides to test his charge that Cajetan prefers Aristotle to Thomas by looking at Cajetan's commentary on the *De ente et essentia*.

Cajetan on the *De ente*

It is in every way appropriate to turn to Cajetan's commentary on the *De ente et essentia* to discover what his understanding is of the general teaching that there is a nonidentity of essence and existence in all things other than God. In commenting on Ia, q. 3, a. 4, which asks if essence and *esse* are identical in God, Cajetan notes that the question is most subtle and proper to venerable *(antiquis)* metaphysicians; moderns, by contrast, hold to an identity of essence and *esse* in creatures as well as in God. Cajetan will not here take up the question of the text, the identity of essence and *esse* in God, nor the wider one of the nonidentity in creatures. The Leonine editors refer us to the commentary on the *De ente*, cap. 5. Gilson, before turning to that commentary, indulges in a long footnote in which he confesses the personal impression that Cajetan has not really entered into the fundamental notions of Thomas's metaphysics and that it is not certain that Cajetan is really interested in understanding Thomas's teaching. He refers to Cajetan's lengthy commentary on Ia, q. 54, a. 1 (as well as q. 79, a. 1). How does the commentary on the first text support Gilson's personal impression?

Thomas wrote, "Action is properly the actuality of virtue, just as existence is the actuality of substance or of essence" ("Actio enim est proprie actualitas virtutis, sicut esse est actualitas substantiae vel essentiae"). Cajetan, rather than ask what this means, something one wishing to understand Thomas would surely ask, "asks if the premises from which Thomas departs are true and how they permit him to prove the conclusion." The answer to that should surely go a long way toward understanding the text, but Gilson seems to regard it as a diversion.

A further example: Thomas says, "hence in God alone his substance is his existence and his action" ("unde in solo Deo sua substantia est suum esse et suum agere"), at which point Cajetan forms the proposition "his actuality is pure act" ("actus purus est sua actualitas"), and says this cannot be understood in a formal sense, because the formal sense of act implies potency. But

it seems that one can understand it materially by begging the question, since what one is seeking is precisely the activity of the angel, which is not pure act, would not be its substance, and so on. Gilson concludes: "He has before his eyes the metaphysical notion of the act of existing, but he turns away to the Aristotelian notions of act and potency and asks what can be made of an act which is not the act of anything. For pure Aristotelian doctrine, that is indeed complicated."[21]

It is difficult to know what to make of this footnote. The first criticism is no criticism at all; understanding a position based on an argument involves asking if the premises are true. This is scarcely a diversion. The second criticism gives short shrift to the abiding difficulty of applying to God terminology originally based on our knowledge of creatures. Act and potency are correlatives. If one would speak of pure act, this must be taken into account. Is Gilson questioning this? Whatever further he has in mind is impossible to tell from the footnote. But it serves as a rhetorical bridge to his discussion of Cajetan on Chapter 5 of the *De ente*.

He begins by criticizing, saying that the language of Cajetan is not that of St. Thomas. It is not that he avoids *esse*, but he uses *existentia* more often than Thomas does. "Maybe this is unintentional and unimportant." He adds that Cajetan is more interested in the notion of substance given by Aristotle, and in discussing Scotus and Trombeta he uses their language. He particularly objects to the phrase *esse actualis existentiae*. More seriously, Gilson claims that in invoking II SCG 52, Cajetan attributes to Thomas a way of posing the question which is proper to Scotus and Trombeta, saying that for Thomas in every creature "quidditas et ejus esse actualis existentiae distinguuntur realiter. . . ." We must weigh these words.[22] What Cajetan is accused of is holding that after the composition of essence and *esse* there is need for the further actuality of *esse actualis existentiae*.[23] This follows from Cajetan's alleged taking on the Scotist perspective. Gilson's argument comes down to little more than this. Scotus uses the phrase, Scotus denies the real distinction of essence and *esse*; therefore in using the phrase, Cajetan eliminates what Thomas means by

21. 271, n. 2. Of course, "Pure Act" has been bequeathed to us by Aristotle.

22. 272.

23. On this matter, and for a general defense of Cajetan against such attacks, see John P. Reilly, *Cajetan's Notion of Existence* (The Hague, 1971).

esse (273). The argument is all too typical of this bill of particulars against Cajetan. No one reading these pages of Gilson would be able to reconstruct the truly remarkable q. 12 of the youthful Cajetan's commentary on Chapter 5 of the youthful Thomas Aquinas's *De ente et essentia*.

Cajetan addresses two questions here: *utrum esse actualis existentiae et essentia distinguantur realiter; an intelligentiae sint compositae ex actu et potentia*. The discussion of the first question is divided into three parts. First, he gives the opinion of Scotus; second, he gives the opinion of St. Thomas; third, he responds to the Scotistic arguments against the real distinction. In short, Cajetan first sets down objections to the truth he means to defend, then argues for that truth, then replies to the objections. Very Scholastic, very Thomistic.

1. Although Scotus argues in his exposition of the *Sentences*, III, d. 6, q. 1 that essence and *esse actualis existentiae* are really the same in creatures, Cajetan lets the Scotist position be represented by Antonio Trombeta who wrote a quodlibet precisely on the subject, whereas the passage in Scotus is formally concerned with the union of human nature and the divine person. Cajetan then states ten arguments Trombeta fashioned against the claim that essence and *esse* differ in creatures. In the objections, *esse* and *existentia* predominate, the phrase *esse actualis existentiae* occurs once.

2. For the opinion of Thomas Aquinas, Cajetan relies on II SCG 52 which asks if *esse* and *quod est* differ in created intellectual substances and provides eight arguments in the affirmative. Cajetan gives three arguments, the first of which is the first of St. Thomas, the second a conflation of Thomas's second and third, and the third, Thomas's fourth.

3. Cajetan then replies seriatim to the ten objections of Trombeta.

Gilson approaches this effort with a little exordium in which he repeats the claim that the use of *esse actualis existentiae* causes Cajetan to miss what Thomas means by *esse*. "That is our hypothesis. In a sense, it is based on our high opinion of the eminent philosophical gifts of which Cajetan has given so many proofs. Except, we repeat, if our interpretation of Saint Thomas is false, one hardly knows how else to explain this transposition of the question. For a commentator who had discerned the act of being, the only response to make to Duns Scotus is to refuse the transfer of the problem from the plane

of *esse* to that of the being of actual existence; it is strange that a mind like Cajetan's did not see that."[24] This of course begs the question.

Gilson adds that it does seem unlikely that the great commentator would miss a central tenet of his master's thought. Moreover, he admits that his charge has the great defect of not being historically provable "since one can prove the presence of an idea by the texts which affirm it but the absence of an idea is not established by the absence of an affirmation. In the case of Cajetan, who professes to expose and defend the doctrine of Saint Thomas, the undertaking is practically desperate" (273). Apparently not expecting any reply to his charge, Gilson multiplies questions.

First he dips far back in the commentary on the *De ente*, though still in Chapter 5, where he finds a quadripartite composition: matter, form, the essence composed of these, and existence. He means that there are two compositions and four elements: the composition of matter and form = essence which is composed with *esse*. Cajetan uses *existentia*, not *esse* in the passage.[25]

The point of the passage is a discussion of the composition of *esse* and *essentia* in separate substances. Cajetan prefaces the discussion with remarks about material substances, a pedagogical necessity since our knowledge of separate substance is parasitic on our knowledge of composed or material substance. Clarity about the latter is productive of clarity as to how the former differ. In material substances we find four really distinct things: matter, form, the essence composed of them, and existence. Take man. There is the matter in which his form is received and the form itself which is the act of the matter, and the human essence which is neither the form nor the matter, and the *esse* of actual existence whereby man formally exists *in rerum natura*. Thus one finds in such substances two compositions pertaining to the genus of substance, that of matter and form and that of essence and existence "quae vocatur compositio ex esse et essentia" (N. 90).

Cajetan then gives two ways in which these compositions are similar and

24. "Telle est notre hypothèse. Elle se fonde, en un sens, sur notre haute estime pour les dons philosophiques éminents don't Cajetan a donné tant de preuves. Sauf, redisons le, si nôtre interprétation de saint Thomas est fausse, on ne voit guère comment expliquer autrement cette transposition de la question. Pour un commentateur qui a discerné la notion d'acte d'être, la seule réponse à faire à Duns Scot est de refuser le transfert du problème du plan de l'esse a celui de l'etre d'existence actuelle; il est étrange qu'un esprit tel que Cajetan ne l'ai pas vu" (273).

25. I*n de ente et essentia,* p. 141.

ten in which they differ. Both are compositions of potency and act; furthermore, in both the terms are in the same genus. There follows a list of ten differences (142–44).

Gilson professes to be surprised by the use of *esse* and *essentia*, suggesting that this might be due to a humanist scruple on Cajetan's part, since *existentia* is not classic. But he waives discussion of the synonymy of *esse* and *existentia* for Cajetan to turn to what he takes to be the insertion of essence between matter and form, on the one hand, and existence, on the other. "Mais continuons." Gilson describes Cajetan's procedure and then seems to embark on a discussion of the ten differences between the two kinds of composition. He takes up the first three and then drifts into more or less unanchored innuendo and accusation.

What is the first difference Cajetan gives? The extremes of the composition of matter and form are parts of substance and not in the genus of substance properly speaking. They are in it *reductive*, insofar as the composite of which they are parts subsists and thus is in the genus of substance. They are called substance *in obliquo*. Neither of the extremes of the second composition is a part of substance, for one is substance, namely, essence which falls in the direct predicamental line, and the other, existence, is *extra substantiam*. Gilson recounts this and finds that the remark about substance and *esse* is supported by II SCG 52.

> Concerning the first point, henceforth we know, what elsewhere one might have doubted, just what the essence interposed by Cajetan between these components and its existence is: it is substance. This fact suggests a supplementary hypothesis: Would Cajetan be concerned to reenforce the ontological distinction of substance in order to prepare for *esse*, which in Thomas actuates the form, a recipient already fully constituted?[26]

As our author might say, one has to read such passages in order to believe them. Substance obviously has sinister connotations for Gilson, and the rea-

26. "Concernant le premier point, nous savons désormais, comme on pouvait d'ailleurs s'en douter, ce qu'est au juste l'essence interposée par Cajetan entre ses composants et son existence: c'est la substance. Ce fait suggère une hypothèse supplèmentaire: Cajetan ne serait-il pas soucieux de renforcer la distinction ontologique de la substance, afin to préparer pour l'*esse,* qui chez Thomas actue la forme, un récepteur déjà pleinement constitué?" ("Cajetan et l'existence," 274).

son is that he thinks Cajetan understands the real distinction as the composition of a fully constituted substance and *esse*, as if the essence of substance enjoyed some kind of existence before receiving *esse actualis existentiae*. He notes in a footnote that earlier Cajetan had explicitly denied what Gilson now accuses him of holding,[27] from which Gilson concludes not that he must be misunderstanding Cajetan but rather that Cajetan gives us a choice between two opposed positions, both of which he holds. The denial is certainly there; what isn't there is the affirmation Gilson is here inveighing against. Does he really care what Cajetan holds?

But it is the second difference between the composition of matter and form and essence and *esse* that rouses Gilson. While both compositions involve potency and act, matter is pure potency, whereas essence "is not pure potency, but a quidditatively complete being in some species."[28] All Gilson's suspicions seem vindicated, he suggests. "What is this essence which, outside of all actual existence, is not pure potency but enjoys a quidditatively complete being?" (275). Gilson takes it to mean that the substance is already constituted—that is, exists—before receiving existence! What is the true position? In itself essence is nothing ("He represents the essence of the substance as already constituted before receiving existence, whereas before existence there is nothing"[29]).

Gilson seems to think that the analysis of substance is chronological, as if distinct temporal phases were being distinguished. Does he imagine matter and form awaiting composition and, when composed, awaiting existence? Apparently. His objection elevates matter above essence since not even of prime matter can it be said that it is nothing. In a manner that seems increasingly disingenuous, Gilson declares himself hesitant to believe that Cajetan has said such things. But it is what Gilson's criticisms reveal about his own understanding of the doctrine at issue that requires a treatment of its own.

A significant element in Gilson's own position is his anti-Aristotelianism. For Aristotle, a substance is a composite of matter and form, "but for him there is no question of a quidditatively constituted substance which will re-

27. *In de ente et essentia* cap. 2, n. 25, p. 44.

28. "non est pura potentia, sed ens in aliqua specie quiditative completum."

29. "Il se représente l'essence de la substance déjà constituée avant de recevoir l'existence, alors qu'avant l'existence il n'y a rien" (275).

ceive an *actus existentiae*; all he says is that the term of generation is not the form [*eidos*, *ousia*] but the *tode ti*, that is, the singular susbtance. One wonders if that is all Cajetan wants to say: the cause of the composite is the cause of its existence? Gilson seems to see a rivalry between saying that the term of generation is the compound of form and matter and that generation is a *via ad esse*. Is Aristotle taken to understand generation as the production of a composite without existence whereas Thomas sees it as the production of *esse* without reference to the composite? One hesitates to attribute this to a scholar of Gilson's standing, but we will have to explore later the Gilsonian account of *esse* when he is speaking in his own name and not misreading Cajetan.

Although he speaks condescendingly of Cajetan "doing his best to imitate the language of Saint Thomas," he does unequivocally laud Cajetan's account of the fifth difference between the compositions of matter and form, and of essence and *esse*. The passage seems to remove all his doubts. This is prompted by Cajetan's "so it is that this being of actual existence relates to nothing else as potency to act, but is the ultimate actuality of each thing, even of its form."[30] What more could one ask—save that Cajetan had used *esse* and not *esse actualis existentiae*?

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Gilson confesses that it is fruitless to multiply such details. Cajetan writes so indistinguishably from Thomas that one can scarcely tell the difference between them. Still, Gilson thinks he should be permitted to ask whether for Cajetan "Thomas's *esse* is not reduced to the substance put into a state of real existence by the efficaciousness of its cause?"[31] And so we are off on another hunt for flaws in Cajetan, but it is valuable at least in this that it yields a statement of Gilson that, as he would put it, sounds odd. Speaking in his own name, Gilson proclaims that "Thomas would rather say that the existence of the substance is caused by *esse* and that an accident has no other *esse* than that of substance."[32] Existence is the cause of the existence of the substance. Since

30. "unde fit ut ipsum esse actualis existentiae ad nihil aliud comparetur ut potentia ad actum, sed sit ultima actualitas omnis rei etiam ipsius formae."

31. "l'esse thomiste ne se réduit pas à la substance mise en état d'existence réelle par l'efficace de sa cause" (277).

32. "... Thomas dirait plutôt que l'existence de la substance est causée par l'esse et que l'accident n'a pas d'autre esse que celui de la susbtance" (278).

it is efficient cause that has been under discussion—is the existence of the creature perhaps merely a relation of dependence to its efficient cause?—it seems permitted to wonder if for Gilson *esse* is an efficient cause—not the *ipsum esse subsistens* who is God, but the created act of existence? And what does it mean to say that the *esse* of the accident is the *esse* of substance? Taken literally, this is surely false. For an accident to be is to be in substance, so of course the *esse substantiale* is presupposed, but how could the *esse substantiale* be the same as the *esse accidentale*?

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It has been necessary to examine in this much detail the Gilsonian attack on Cardinal Cajetan. It would be fruitless to continue the analysis since we find pretty much more of the same. It is embarrassing to read this needling and ambiguous attack on one of the giants of the Thomistic school. But of course it is that school that Gilson will ultimately repudiate. The history of Thomism will become a history of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, Sylvester of Ferrara, Capreolus—off with their heads! As for his contemporaries, Garrigou-Lagrange is demonized by Gilson and Maritain is said not to have understood the master to the study of whom he devoted his long philosophical life. The effect of this scorched-earth policy is to turn our attention more and more to the one operating the flamethrower. It is just possible that the man who finds everyone else wanting has himself misunderstood St. Thomas. It is possible that those he criticizes got it right and that he got it wrong.

It is because of this plausible possibility that we must return to Gilson later. Our chief concern lies in the way such developments have led so many contemporary Thomists to speak disparagingly of the *praeambula fidei*. Gilson's attack on Cajetan is related to that, but his own positions, developed in rejecting such guides as Cajetan, play a more proximate role in that disparagement.

Three ~ DE LUBAC AND CAJETAN

Il nous faudra bientôt le [*Cajetan*] *defendre. . . .*
Gilson to De Lubac, June 21, 1965

Another wholesale attack on Cardinal Cajetan was mounted by Gilson's eventual correspondent, Henri de Lubac, S.J., in his discussion of the notion of the supernatural.

In 1992, Henru de Lubac published a second and augmented edition of his *Mémoire sur l'occasion de mes écrits*. Taken together with the publication of his exchange of letters with Gilson—or more accurately of Gilson's letters to him, amply annotated and commented on by de Lubac—one interested in what has been going on in Catholic circles with respect to the status of philosophy and the *praeambula fidei* has resources whose value can scarcely be overestimated.[1] The rueful tone of these documents, the recurrent lament of the aging de Lubac that he has fallen out of favor while a hostile band of postconciliar thinkers has gained prominence in the Society of Jesus and in the Church at large, should not obscure the fact that the elderly Jesuit had been created cardinal in 1983 by Pope John Paul II, a recognition at least as significant as his invitation decades earlier to serve as a *peritus* at Vatican II. Despite this sense in old age of new foes, what abides in the cardinal's outlook is that his true enemy is the Thomistic tradition he ran afoul of in 1946 when he published *Surnaturel*. De Lubac's self-image is of a theologian defending St. Thomas against the Thomists.

Johnson called the Irish an honest race because they never spoke well of one another. The same might be said of students of Thomas, though that does not of course mean all of them are Irish. De Lubac tells us that even as

1. *Lettres de M. Etienne Gilson addressées au P. Henri de Lubac, et commentées par celui-ci* (Paris: Cerf, 1986).

a young Scholastic on the Isle of Jersey he had been a maverick within his order, resisting the emphasis on Suarez and earning the epithet of Thomist, even neo-Thomist, from the authorities, making him "twice a heretic with respect to the 'doctrines of the Society.'"[2] But already he was a Thomist against Thomism, one who gave himself the assignment of determining whether "the teaching of Saint Thomas on this capital point [the supernatural] was indeed that offered by the Thomist school as established in the sixteenth century, codified in the seventeenth, and affirmed even more starkly in the twentieth." This task, taken up when he was a student of theology, led eventually to the 1946 book.[3]

The publication of *Surnaturel* brought de Lubac under a cloud and he was effectively silenced, that is, no longer permitted to publish. At first he thought that this was due to enemies in Rome, chiefly Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., always the villain of choice, but eventually de Lubac learned that it had been other Jesuits, not Dominicans, who had questioned the orthodoxy of his views. But those views, de Lubac and many others came to think, had prevailed at Vatican II, the sweetest vindication of all.[4] His later elevation to the College of Cardinals was taken to confirm the vindication of his views. But that took place when the theological scene had already changed drastically. De Lubac found that he had survived into a time when, in the Church, in his own order, there were "many who were enthusiasts, opponents or simply docile, but all of them equally foolish, a para-Council for whom work, when it did not conform to the new program, was either neglected or falsified."[5]

Whatever the vagaries of de Lubac's reputation within the Jesuit Order,

2. *Mémoire sur l'occasion de mes écrits*, 2nd ed. Culture et Verité (Namur, 1992), 33, n. 8.

3. De Lubac's charge that Thomas has been distorted by Thomists sometimes extends to Thomas himself. What the charge comes down to is that a key teaching of the faith has been obscured by the way in which the supernatural has been presented. "C'est qu'en effet je crois avoir montré specialement dans le deuxième partie, don't la composition est assez rigoreuse, que depuisqu'elles avaient abandonné la synthèse traditionelle systematisée *et déjà un peu compromise dans l'oeuvre de saint Thomas*, les diverse écoles de la scolastique moderne ne pouvaient que s'epuiser dans les combats stériles, chacune ayant à la fois tort et raison contre les autres, en même temps qu'elles se retiraient à l'écart de la pensée vivante, dans un monde artificiel, laissant le champ libre à tous les avatars de la 'philosophie séparée'" (Ibid., 34; emphasis added).

4. See the mildly triumphalist *Entretien autour de Vatican II. Souvenirs et réflexions* (Paris: Cerf, 1985).

5. H. de Lubac, *Petite catechèse*, 166.

his criticism of Cardinal Cajetan has become received opinion, as one can see in a recent piece by O, Boulnois.[6] Boulnois speaks thus of de Lubac: "Thus it was that the question of the supernatural had, in midcentury, pitted Father de Lubac against a number of reputedly 'Thomist' theologians, to the point that he was disturbed in his teaching. For de Lubac, who restored Thomas to the tradition of the Fathers of the Church, man's being is naturally oriented to God. Man has a natural desire for the vision of God, an aspiration that nature by itself cannot fulfill, and that only divine grace can accomplish. The supernatural is thus complementary to nature: grace accomplishes the ends of nature which is marked by a congenital lack."[7] The tone is partisan; Boulnois is clearly with de Lubac and against those "Thomists." And who might they be?

This interpretation is opposed to that of Cajetan, a Thomist of the sixteenth century. For Cajetan, nature does nothing in vain: it cannot have an aspiration it could not accomplish by its own means. If there is a desire for God in man, this is not natural, but added by God in a gratuitous act of omnipotence and His will. By right, nature is self-sufficiency (this is the theory of pure nature), and if in fact man always desires God, this is simply because God wills it and substitutes it for the order of nature. Cajetan thus combined an atheist humanism and a theology destructive of human nature. One can see the devastating consequences that de Lubac was able to draw from the course of history. De Lubac then claimed to return to "the true Thomas," to a Christian humanism, to the tradition of the Church, when he emphasized the natural desire man has to see God.[8]

6. "Quand Saint Thomas répond aux Thomistes," *France Catholique*, January 22, 1993. It was reprinted in Florent Gaboriau, *Thomas d'Aquin en dialogue* (Paris, 1993), 11–14. I will cite from this reprinted form.

7. "C'est ainsi que la question du Surnaturel a opposé au milieu du siècle, le père de Lubac, à de nombreux théologiens réputés 'thomistes,' a ce que lui valut d'être inquiété dans son enseignement. Pour Lubac, qui replace Thomas dans la tradition des Pères de l'Eglise, l'être de l'homme est par nature orienté vers Dieu. L'homme a un désir naturel de la vision de Dieu, aspiration que la nature ne peut accomplir par elle-même, et que seule la grâce divine peut combler. Le surnaturel est donc complémentaire de la nature: la grâce accomplit les fins de la nature, alors que celle-ci est marquée par un manque congénital" (Ibid., 12).

8. "Cette lecture s'oppose à celle de Cajetan, thomiste du xvie siècle. Pour Cajetan, la nature ne fait rien en vain: elle ne peut avoir une aspiration qu'elle ne pourrait combler par ses propre moyens. S'il y a un désir de Dieu en l'homme, celui-ci n'est pas naturel, mais surajouté par Dieu, dans un acte gratuit de sa toute-puissance et de sa volonté. En droit, la nature est auto-suffisance (c'est la théorie de la nature pure), et si en fait l'homme désire toujours Dieu, c'est simplement parce que Dieu le veut et qu'il se substitute à l'ordre de la nature. Cajetan

Almost every charge against Cajetan in this paragraph is false. Indeed, this is a far more radical criticism of Cajetan even than Gilson's. Now the venerable commentator is said to have conjoined an atheist humanism and a theology destructive of human nature, with historical consequences one can scarcely imagine. At the heart of Cajetan's deviation seems to be the acceptance of a pure human nature. Géry Prouvost praises the profound analysis of Henri de Lubac for having shown the major role played by Cajetan, Suarez, and John of St. Thomas in the elaboration of a theory of "pure nature."[9] What does this theory maintain? That man is made for a natural happiness in such a way that if he is called to the vision of God, as he is, such a grace can only be superadded. The theory thus denies that man has a natural desire for supernatural beatitude "the aspiration for which is due to a grace specifically Christian." The commentators of the sixteenth century, by holding that man is not naturally called to the vision of God, end by juxtaposing a natural end of man distinct from his beatifying fulfillment. "They give credit then to a secularized natural order—cultural, moral, philosophic. . . . Pure nature is thus linked to 'separated reason.'"[10]

De Lubac is thus accepted on his own terms, as the defender of Thomas against the Thomistic tradition that has been so vitiated by Cajetan that it has paved the way for all the worst ills of the modern world. Boulnois quotes without demur de Lubac's remark that even in Thomas Aquinas himself the true doctrine of the supernatural is slightly compromised,[11] an aside that suggests that it is not so much Thomism de Lubac is defending as "la vision traditionelle," having its origin in the Fathers.[12] Thomas himself is measured against de Lubac's understanding of that tradition.

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conjugue donc un humanisme athée et une théologie destructrice de la nature humaine. On voit quelles conséquences dévastatrices Lubac pouvait tirer pour la suite de l'histoire. Lubac prétendant alors revenire au 'veritable Thomas,' à l'humanisme chrétien, à la tradition de l'Eglise, en soulignant le désir naturel que l'homme a de voir Dieu" (Ibid.).

9. Géry Prouvost, *Thomas d'Aquin et les thomismes* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), 48.

10. Ibid. Prouvost's criticisms, all of them admittedly secondhand, effectively criticize Cajetan for holding what Thomas Aquinas explicitly taught.

11. Bulnois, 13.

12. "Soit on voit en Thomas un docteur *commun*—et on tire du côté de la tradition augustinienne [Lubac]; soit on met l'accent sur sa *singularité*, et on le tire vers Aristote, du côté du composé âme-corps qui ne peut désirer de lui-même la vision de Dieu [ses adversaires 'thomistes']" (Boulnois, 15). So the controversy over the supernatural also involves an anti-Aristotelian animus.

There has been some dissent from this received opinion about Cajetan and the Thomistic school.[13] At the time of *Surnaturel*, de Lubac was severely challenged and, as we have seen, silenced. But he outlived his critics or they fell out of fashion and he emerged in the postconciliar Church as a surviving hero whose teaching on the supernatural and negative assessment of the whole Thomistic school became part of postconciliar lore. Eventually, as de Lubac himself ruefully observed in the second edition of his *Mémoire*, he himself was pushed aside. It is a melancholy thought that the refutation of de Lubac's position had to wait his relative eclipse.

Of course, a charge of such magnitude has to be carefully assessed. But by many it wasn't. Like its formulator, they were predisposed to believe the worst about the Thomistic tradition. Presumably the doctrine attributed to Cajetan could be found in his writings. But this is just where the difficulties begin. Florent Gaboriau, not for the first time, has countered the de Lubac view in *Thomas d'Aquin en dialogue*, the book that reprints the Boulnois article as well as Gaboriau's critique and a reply from Boulnois that prompted Gaboriau to write his book. Where, Gaboriau wants to know, did Cajetan write the things attributed to him by de Lubac *et sequaces eius*? A historical charge must repose on evidence. But Gaboriau is unable to find any texts of the great commentator that say what he is said to have said. Or, when accurate, what is attributed to him as an aberration is pure Thomism, for example, the notion of "pure nature." "Let me add that in fact the idea of a *purus homo* is not strange to Cajetan, but if one complains of that in him, it would appear that Saint Thomas too must be reproved. The phrase occurs not only in the biblical commentaries but in his masterpiece, the phrase repeated three times in the same article."[14]

How does Boulnois respond? He admits that he was not impartial in his piece but then he thinks that Thomas Aquinas is no more a Cajetanian than Kant is a Heideggerian. He offers five points in support of this.

13. Besides *Thomas d'Aquin en dialogue*, Florent Gaboriau has written invaluable books touching on this criticism of Cajetan on obediential potency and the natural desire to see God; see *Thomas d'Aquin, penseur dans l'Eglise* (Paris, 1992) and *Entrer en théologie avec saint Thomas d'Aquin*. And now there is Lawrence Feingold's *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Rome, 2001). Feingold both defends Cajetan against de Lubac's criticism and criticizes the value of de Lubac's own reading of St. Thomas. His bibliography is all but exhaustive. See as well Romanus Cessario, O.P., "Cardinal Cajetan and His Critics," *Nova et Vetera* 3, no. 1 (2005): 109–18.

14. Gaboriau, *Thomas d'Aquin en dialogue*, 17.

First, he quotes the *Summa contra gentes*, III, 57: "Every intellect naturally desires the vision of the divine substance." In Chapter 51, Thomas had written, "It is possible that the substance of God can be seen by the intermediary of intellect, by the intellectual substances as well as by our souls."

Second, by his own admission, Cajetan sometimes departs from Thomas, something Boulnois had mentioned in his original article. In commenting on the *Summa*, IaIIae, q. 13, in paragraphs 10 and 3 of his commentary Cajetan says that Thomas is wrong in saying that the human intelligence desires the vision of God. Now Boulnois adds that of course fidelity to Thomas was not yet a matter of conserving a system so much as responding to new questions and Cajetan's disagreements must be seen in that perspective. Boulnois throws in as an example of the way Cajetan follows the evolution of problems his defense of the rights of Indians (IIaIIae, q. 66), something Thomas of course had not discussed.

Third, Boulnois agrees that Cajetan is not "l'auteur de la déviance," since de Lubac has shown that the real originator was Denys the Carthusian, but Cajetan's authority gave it entry to the Thomistic school. "But it is clear that his theory of a pure nature which does not desire God indeed prefigures 'atheistic humanism' which simply completes the program. And if it is by an 'obediential' potency (that is, only as the result of a miracle) that man desires God, this is not by his nature as man, and that connects with 'a antihumanist theology.'" Thomas may use the phrase *purus homo* but Cajetan's novelty is to apply it to the desire for God. And Boulnois refers Gaboriau to the proceedings of the Cajetan conference held at Naples in 1993, *Rationalisme analogique et humanisme théologique. La culture de Thomas de Vio il Gaetano*.

Fourth, Boulnois says he has not made his own de Lubac's views that Thomas too waffled on the supernatural. By way of exculpation, he adds that when de Lubac was young it was a requirement to cover any view with a Thomistic label, but now it is possible to defend those views without appeal to Thomas. To avoid the implication of this defense, he adds that de Lubac always thought that he was defending the deep truth of Thomas that had been deformed by Thomists.

Fifth, this controversy shows, Boulnois observes, that there is no Thomism outside the work of St. Thomas; as soon as one goes beyond it, there is an infinity of Thomisms. (This might be called the Protagoras defense.)

Gaboriau replies:

Ad 1m. Two texts from Thomas are cited but there is no support for the view that Cajetan ever held otherwise.

Ad 2m. Nothing in the text of Cajetan cited provides the slightest support for the claim that he expresses "manifestly" an intention to part company with Thomas, or that Cajetan thought Thomas had gone too far or that he was mistaken.

Ad 3m. As for Denis the Carthusian, there is no evidence Cajetan ever read him, so however contagious Denis's deviation, Cajetan was not exposed to it. But it is the claim of a deviation, whatever its provenance, that interests Gaboriau. Where is the proof that Cajetan deviated? Maybe Cardinal Journet is right and de Lubac understands neither Thomas nor Cajetan.[15]

Ad 4m. Boulnois provides no incriminating texts, but fashions an argument instead. If man desires God by an obediential potency he does not do so by nature. This isn't Cajetan, for whom the obediential potency in virtue of which we can see God is of our nature as man. The attribution to Cajetan of the parentage of atheistic humanism on the basis of such misreading is bold. Not even de Lubac went so far.

Ad 5m. One searches in vain in Cajetan for any text that maintains human nature is "an enclosed and self-sufficient whole." And what is the meaning of the remark about needing to be a Thomist once and having more freedom now? De Lubac put forth his views as Thomistic.

The public exchange was cut off at this point, perhaps not surprisingly since it had begun in a newspaper. Having lost his interlocutor, Gaboriau pursued the discussion in *Thomas d'Aquin en dialogue*, an indispensable book by an indispensable author. The single most important point to emerge from this exchange is the unmet challenge to indicate the place where Ca-

15. "Sur la fin du xve siècle, un auteur prolixe, mais non sans valeur, Denys le Chartreux, développait une thèse qui a prévalu dans presque toutes les écoles de la scolastique moderne: sans une fin surajoutée par Dieu à sa fin normale, naturelle, il n'y aurait eu au fond de l'l'esprit humain, à proprement parler, aucun 'désir de voir Dieu,' car la nature humaine, comme toutes les autres natures créées, ne peut tendre qu'à sa fin 'naturelle.'" From which, the cardinal segues into "Or, dans la génération suivante, au debut du xvie siècle, Cajetan reprend exactement, pour l'essentiel, la thèse de Denys le Chartreux," the great difference being that, while Denis was attacking Thomas, Cajetan claimed to be defending him (Henri Cardinal de Lubac, *Entretien autour de Vatican II* [Paris, 1985], 28–29).

jetan taught the doctrine attributed to him. Since his supposed deviation is said to have put the whole Thomistic school onto a false track and, at least for Boulnois, led on inexorably to atheistic humanism, this is, needless to say, crucial. On what text or texts of Cajetan does de Lubac base his assessment of the great commentator?

In Search of a Text

Thomas on Obediential Potency

De Lubac's principal objection to obediential potency as the explanation of our desire to see God is that, in his view, this makes this capacity the result of a miracle and not something in our nature. If it is by pure obedience that our nature relates to the transcendent, our nature was not made for that end. Either the desire is natural or it is the result of a miraculous intervention without basis in our nature.

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What does Thomas mean by "obediential potency"?[16] Florent Gaboriau deploys a number of texts.

In discussing the question whether God would have become incarnate even if man had not sinned, Thomas answers that, since everywhere in Scripture the Incarnation is linked to man's sinfulness, and Scripture is our only access to things that depend solely on the will of God, the Incarnation presupposes our sinfulness. The third objection is to the effect that human nature is not made capable of grace because of sin, so it must be so capable before sin. So even if mankind had not sinned, human nature would be capable of this grace. Thomas replies:

Ad tertium dicendum quod duplex capacitas attendi potest in humana natura. Una quidem secundum ordinem potentiae naturalis quae a Deo semper impletur, qui dat unicuique rei secundum suam capacitatem naturalem,—	In reply to the third it should be said that a twofold capacity is found in human nature. The first is according to the order of natural potency, which is always fulfilled by God who gives to a thing according to its natural

16. See Steven A. Long, "Obediential Potency, Human Knowledge, and the Natural Desire for God," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 37 (1997): 45–63, and "On the Possibility of a Purely Natural End for Man: A Response to Denis Bradley," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 211–37.

Alia vero secundum ordinem divinae potentiae, cui omnis creatura obedit ad nutum. Et ad hoc pertinet ista capacitas. Non autem Deus omnem talem capacitatem naturae replet: alioquin Deus non posset facere in creatura nisi quod facit: quod falsum est, ut in Primo habitum est. (25.5; 105.6)

capacity.—The other is according to the order of divine potency, which every creature obeys on command [*ad nutum*]. It is to the latter that this capacity pertains. But God does not fulfill every such capacity of nature, otherwise he could only do what he does, which is false. . . . (IIIa, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3m)

If Scripture always links the Incarnation to sin, expressing God's will in the matter, it must nonetheless be said that God's power is not limited and he could have become man even if man had not sinned. Human nature's ability to obey on command does not contradict our nature.

In discussing whether God's power is infinite, Thomas makes the point that, however rare from the point of view of the usual course of things, when God wills things to go otherwise, he does not act contrary to nature, but fulfills it. This applies to man as well: "And because of this a twofold potency is distinguished in them: one natural, to proper operations or acts, the other which is called 'of obedience,' to the things they receive from God."[17]

Gaboriau draws attention to several texts in the *Disputed Question on Truth*. In the first, the objector, having invoked the principle that any potency not reduced to act is imperfect, goes on to say that the angelic intellect must be in potency to know all things, otherwise it would be inferior to ours. Thus if in the state of beatitude it did not know all things, its knowledge would remain imperfect and that seems incompatible with the perfection of beatitude that removes all imperfection.

. . . dicendum quod aliquid est in potentia ad alterum dupliciter. Uno modo in potentia naturali; et sic intellectus creatus est in potentia ad omnia illa cognoscenda quae suo lumine naturali manifestari possunt; et nihil horum angelus

Notice that something is in potency to another in two ways. First, in natural potency, and thus the created intellect is in potency to know all those things that can be manifested to it by its natural light, and the blessed angel is

17. "Et propter hoc in eis distinguitur potentia duplex: una naturalis ad proprias operationes vel motus; alia quae obedientiae dicitur, ad ea quae a Deo recipiunt" (*Q. D. de potentia*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 1m). See also: "Unde nihil prohibet quin natura creata sit in potentia ad aliqua fienda per divinam potentiam, quae inferior potentia facere non potest: et ista vocatur potentia obedientialis, secundum quod quaelibet creatura Creatori obedit" (Ibid., q. 6, a. 1, ad 18m).

beatus ignorat; ex quorum ignorantia remaneret intellectus angeli imperfectus. Quaedam vero potentia est obedientiae tantum, sicut dicitur aliquid esse in potentia ad illa quae supra naturam Deus in eo potest facere; et si talis potentia non reducitur ad actum, non erit potentia imperfecta: et ideo intellectus angeli beati non est imperfectus, si non cognoscat omnia quae Deus potest ei revelare.(*Q. D. de veritate*, q. 8, a. 4, ad 13m)

ignorant of nothing ignorance of which would leave its intellect imperfect. But some potency is of obedience only, as something is said to be in potency to those things above its nature that God can effect in it; if such a potency is not reduced to act, it will not be imperfect. Therefore the intellect of the blessed angel is not imperfect if it does not know all the things that God can reveal to it.

So there are natural and obediential potencies and the latter are in potency to what is *supra naturam* and are perfected, if they are, by God's action.

Later, in discussing whether prophesy is natural, Thomas addresses the objection that every natural passive potency answers to a natural active potency. But there is in the human soul a natural potency to receive the light of prophesy. Therefore, there must be some natural active potency through which one is made actually to prophesy.

. . . dicendum quod in humana natura est potentia passiva ad recipiendum lumen propheticum, non naturalis, sed tantum potentiae obedientiae, sicut est in natura corporali ad ea quae mirabiliter fiunt; unde non oportet quod tali potentiae passivae respondeat potentia activa naturalis. (*Q. D. de veritate*, q. 12, a. 3, ad 18m)

Note that in human nature there is a passive potency to receive the prophetic illumination, not a natural one, but only a potency of obedience, as with natural bodies to those things that come about marvelously. So there is no need that an active natural potency answer to such a passive potency.

Here a natural potency is contrasted with one of obedience, but the latter is a passive potency of our nature. Again, in speaking of the capacity of Christ for grace, Thomas responds to an objection thus:

Ad tertium dicendum quod capacitas creaturae dicitur secundum potentiam receptivitatis quae est in ipsa. Est autem *duplex* potentia creaturae ad recipiendum. *Una naturalis*, quae potest tota impleri; quia haec non se extendit nisi ad perfectiones naturales. *Alia* est *po-*

To the third it should be said that a creature's capacity is read according to the potency of receptivity in it. But there is a twofold potency in the creature for receiving. One is *natural*, which can be completely fulfilled because it extends only to natural perfections. The other is

tentia obedientialis, secundum quod potest recipere aliquid a Deo; et talis capacitas non potest impleri, quia quidquid Deus de creatura faciat, adhuc remanet in potentia recipienda a Deo.(*De veritate*, q. 29, a. 3, ad 3m)

an *obediential potency* thanks to which it can receive something from God; this capacity cannot be completely fulfilled because whatever God does in the creature it still remains in potency to receiving from God.

Again, a natural potency is sometimes contrasted with obediential potency by St. Thomas, but the latter too is a potency for receptivity that is in us. St. Thomas's teaching seems clear enough. There are two kinds of potency a creature can have, one for things within the range of its nature, the other for things above its nature. The first is brought to fruition by natural means, the second only by God bringing it to realization. Fittingly enough, the second kind of potency is called an obediential potency. It is this that Cajetan is said to have misunderstood. Where?

Cajetan Explains St. Thomas

In the previous chapter, we gave some flavor of Gilson's attack on Cajetan. In their correspondence, Gilson and de Lubac seem to vie with one another to heap obloquy on the great commentator. Gilson came to think that Cajetan had got it wrong from the very first article in the *Summa*. Writing to his Jesuit correspondent about his new book *Le mystère du surnaturel*, Gilson finds it "absolutely perfect." De Lubac has definitively settled the question. As for Cajetan, he has much to answer for. Still, the time may come when they will want to defend him, but not yet. "Fully conscious of how excessive my observation is, I believe in cold blood and on reflection that I would retain *corruptorium*. For two reasons. The commentary on the *first* article of the *Summa of Theology* derails the whole work from the outset. Then, assuming the task of interpreting the sense of the work, he deceived the readers of St. Thomas. It took me years to see this. When I had seen it and had said it, fearfully as a novelty, I was completely astonished that I provoked no reactions. I hadn't known that everyone knew it, but that they wished to leave the skeleton in the closet."[18] For de Lubac, the separation between the master and his commentator is flagrant.[19]

18. *Lettres de M. Etienne Gilson addressées au P. Henri de Lubac et commentée par celui-ci* (Paris, 1986), 74.

19. *Le mystère du surnaturel* (Paris, 1965), 180.

Cajetan has invoked obediential potency to speak of our natural desire to see God. De Lubac maintains that obediential potency is introduced by Thomas only to explain the miraculous. Therefore, Cajetan is taken to reject the Thomistic principle *naturaliter anima est gratiae capax*. Gaboriau sensibly suggests that we look at what Cajetan has written to see if this extremely serious charge is justified. De Lubac bases his charge on Cajetan's commentary on IaIIae, q. 113, a. 10.

In articulo decimo eiusdem quaestionis, dubium triplex occurrit. Primum est circa illud: *anima naturaliter est capax gratiae*. Videtur enim quod secundum praesentem doctrinam, in anima sit potentia naturalis ad gratiam, ac per hoc ad fidem et alia huiusmodi. Cuius oppositum in Prima Parte diximus, contra Scotum.

Secundum est circa illud, quod gratia non est supernaturalem potentiam impii, sicut vita supra potentiam in corpore mortuo. Sicut enim in corpore mortuo est potentia remota ad vitam, et non propinqua; ita in anima impia est potentia remota ad gratiam, et non propinqua. Immo magis vita est in potentia naturali talis corporis, quam gratia in potentia naturali animae impiae: quia illud potest per multas transmutationes reduci in vitam ab agente naturali, gratia vero non.

Tertium est in responsione ad secundum, circa illud, quod non est simile de illuminatione caeci et justificatione impii. Quoniam expresse Auctor in III Contra Gent., cap.CI.X dicit quod justificatio impii est supra id quod ordo rerum exigit; et ideo, sicut Deus non omnes caecos illuminat, ita non vult secundum ordinem rerum ipsam justificationem fieri; et propterea non esse miraculum. Aut ergo hic, aut ibi, a vero declinat.

In Article 10 of the same question a threefold doubt arises. The first has to do with "the soul is naturally capable of grace," for it seems that according to the present doctrine, there is a natural potency for grace in the soul, and so to faith and other like things. But we said the opposite in Part One against Scotus.

The second concerns the statement that grace is not a supernatural potency of the impious, as life is above the potency of a dead body. For just as there is a remote, not proximate, potency to life in the dead body, so in the impious soul there is a remote, not proximate, potency to grace. Indeed life is more in the range of the natural potency of such a body than grace is in the natural potency of the impious soul, because the former can through many changes be reduced to life by a natural agent, not so grace.

The third is in the answer to the second objection that there is no similarity between the illumination of the blind and the justification of the impious, since our author expressly says [III SCG] that the justification of the impious is above what the order of things demands, and therefore, just as God does not cure all the blind, so he does not will justification according to the order of things, and moreover that it is not a miracle. Either here or there he declines from the truth.

These are three difficulties or questions Cajetan raises about the text whose solution will clarify what we have read and thus fulfill one of the tasks of the commentator. Incredibly, de Lubac takes the first *dubium* to express Cajetan's personal misgivings about the text.[20] Boulnois also misconstrues what Cajetan is doing, taking the third *dubium* to be Cajetan reproaching St. Thomas. But the either *p* or *–p* difficulty is the very stuff of the *Summa* and as often as not is resolved not by violating the principle of contradiction, but by softening the opposition. We have here on the part of men accusing Cajetan of misunderstanding texts a pretty thorough failure to read a text. Gaboriau reminds us that such phrases in Cajetan's commentary as "non ambiguitate caret" are the prelude to an explanation, not a conclusion of an interpretation. "To find in this an indication of opposition to Thomistic doctrine on the part of Cajetan one would have equally to find an opposition of St. Thomas to the Gospel when in his own attentive reading of St. Matthew he is led to recognize a difficulty inherent in the text: *haec verba sunt dubia et difficilia*, or again *haec verba difficultatem habent*."[21] And, of course, in the text in question, Cajetan goes on to resolve the doubts and show what Thomas has written to be true and profound.

The first doubt is resolved by noting that "the potency of the soul for grace is *in a certain way natural* and it is also *supernatural*." Can Cajetan's critics have read this text? The potency is natural insofar as the act of free will by which it prepares itself for grace is the product of a natural potency, that is, free will. It is supernatural insofar as that act cannot emanate, as disposing for grace, except by the gratuitous action of God. The form of the act, grace, belongs to a higher order that surpasses the whole of nature. For this reason, the potency is sometimes called natural and sometimes supernatural. After which, Cajetan underscores what he has done. *Et per hoc patet responsio ad primum dubium.*

So too with the third *dubium* that has elicited such inapposite criticism of Cajetan. Cajetan compares the way St. Thomas expresses himself in the *Summa contra gentes* with the way he does in the *Summa*. There is a twofold order to be considered. In a first sense, which connects with the previous article, the gift of grace exceeds the impious more than the gift of glory exceeds

20. *Le mystère*, 184. Gaboriau was the first to point this out; see 59.
21. Ibid.

the just. In another sense, the unfolding that leads to justification sometimes follows the normal course of causality that involves no miracle, but sometimes it comes about in an astonishing way. Cajetan is simply following St. Thomas. "In short, Cajetan's position with regard to obediential potency is really nothing more than a defense of the Thomistic way of distinguishing natural passive potencies from obediential potencies in terms of their corresponding agent. In this he is being faithful to the principles of St. Thomas."[22]

How explain so complete a misunderstanding that was not an isolated gaffe but taken to ground a wholesale attack on Cajetan leading to the widely received view that as a commentator he misrepresented and distorted the text he supposedly was explicating? Gaboriau has a multifaceted explanation.

First, de Lubac was not formed in a biblical climate that would have familiarized him with the understanding of obediential potency as the condition whereby the gift of God makes us capable of becoming children of God. De Lubac got it into his head that obediential potency is introduced to explain miracles, a view he could not have gathered from St. Thomas. He then imagines that Cajetan has rejected the principle of St. Thomas that the soul is naturally capable of grace.

Second, de Lubac's criticism of Cajetan has as deep background a divergence in anthropology. The twentieth-century cardinal's critique of the sixteenth-century cardinal is that Cajetan had a reductive understanding of human nature, considering it to be simply another species to be regarded as a natural species among natural species. This charge goes to the uniqueness of man as made in the image and likeness of God and called to an eternal life with God. Cajetanian man, according to de Lubac, is a closed whole *(un tout fermé)*. And he says we must not blame this on the Jesuits Suarez and Molina; no, it was the Dominican Cajetan who fathered this notion of man as a self-sufficient closed whole.[23] Like the allied critique that Cajetan misunderstood Thomas on man's natural desire for the vision of God, this charge is of the utmost seriousness. It is not one that would be made lightly or advanced

22. Lawrence Feingold, 281. Feingold's Chapter 9, 208–81, is an exhaustive discussion of the texts and, as the summary sentence quoted indicates, a rejection *seriatim* of the objections brought against Cajetan by De Lubac.

23. De Lubac, *Le mystère du surnaturel*, 185. See Gaboriau, 62–63.

without unequivocal evidence. The text provided to support the accusation is "naturale desiderium non se extendit ultra naturae facultatem" (natural desire does not extend beyond the capacity of nature).[24] Let us analyze the text.

The Natural Desire to See God

Question 12 of the First Part of the *Summa* asks how God can be known by us and its first article asks: Can any created intellect see God in his essence? The ultimate end of man resides in the activity of his highest faculty, intellect; if a created intellect could never see the essence of God, either it would never attain happiness or its happiness lies elsewhere, which is against the faith. Man has a natural desire to know the cause when he knows the effect that elicits his wonder. But if the human intellect cannot attain the first cause of things, a desire of nature would be vain. So it must be said that the blessed see the essence of God. Cajetan suggests a twofold difficulty with this.

Primum est *simpliciter* et *ad hominem*. Non enim videtur verum quod intellectus creatus naturaliter desideret videre Deum: quoniam *natura non largitur inclinationem ad aliquid ad quod tota vis naturae perducere nequit*. Cuius signum est, quod organa natura dedit cuilibet potentiae quam intus in anima posuit. Et in II Caeli dicitur quod, si astra haberent vim progressivum, natura dedisset eis organa opportuna. Implicare igitur videtur, quod natura det desiderium visionis divinae, et quod non possit dare requisita ad visionem illam, puta lumen gloriae. Apud s. Thomae quoque doctrinam, ut dictum est in primo articulo huius operis, homo non naturaliter, sed obedientialiter ordinatur in felicitatem illam. Ergo. . . .

The first is as such and *ad hominem*. For it does not seem true that the created intellect naturally desires to see God, since nature does not give to a thing an inclination to that which the whole strength of that nature cannot reach. A sign of this is that nature gives organs to each power that it puts into the soul. And in *On the Heavens* it is said that if the stars had the power to progress nature would have given them appropriate organs. It seems to imply therefore that nature gives the desire for the divine vision and that it cannot give the requisites for that vision, namely, the light of glory. And in St. Thomas's teaching, as we saw in the first article of this work, man is ordered to happiness, not naturally, but obedientally. Therefore. . . .

24. Cajetan, *In Iam*, q. 12, a. 1, n. 10.

The second *dubium* is that, granting the argument, the conclusion does not follow. All that one can infer from the premises is that man can know the first cause, that is, knowledge of God as the cause of things seems naturally desired, but not to see his essence.

Cajetan resolves the first doubt by distinguishing between considering the rational creature absolutely and as ordered to happiness. "If he is considered in the first way, his natural desire does not extend beyond the capacity of nature, and in this sense I concede that he does not naturally desire the vision of God absolutely in himself. But if he is considered in the second way, thus he naturally desires the vision of God, because thus he knows some effects, as of grace and glory, whose cause is God, as God is in himself absolutely, not as the universal agent. Effects being known, it is natural for any intellect to desire knowledge of the cause."[25] The desire for the vision of the divine essence, although it is not natural in the first sense, is natural in the second sense, supposing the revelation of such effects, and that is why Thomas says in III *Summa contra gentes*, caput 50, that the desire of the created intellectual nature would be inane if he could not see God. In this theological work, Cajetan adds, in which things are considered not absolutely, but as ordered to happiness, it is a properly theological conclusion that the vision of God is naturally desired.[26]

Feingold draws attention to an apparent emendation of this explanation later in Cajetan's commentary on IaIIae, q. 3, a. 8.

> In Cajetan's commentary on I-II, q. 3, a. 8, on the other hand, the natural desire to see God does not come directly from man's elevation to a supernatural destiny (as for de Lubac), or from the possibility of such a perfection (Scotus), or from the revelation of *supernatural* effects of God (Cajetan's earlier solution). It comes simply from having an intellectual nature with a natural desire to know the essence of a cause, having

25. Cajetan, *In Iam*, q. 12, a. 1, n. X.

26. Feingold observes that the first objection had been formulated by Denis the Carthusian who could not resolve it and therefore concluded that Thomas was wrong. Cajetan resolves it and saves the argument; see 285. Feingold notes that some Thomists, such as Sylvester of Ferrara, were less than pleased with Cajetan's commentary on this article, but of course were not tempted to call him the corrupter of Aquinas who had derailed the *Summa*, and so on. We expect disagreements among students of Thomas; certainly not even his most fervent admirer would say Cajetan has never fallen short of excellence in commenting on this article or that. What de Lubac does is move from a *misunderstanding* of Cajetan to unrestrained condemnation.

seen its effect. This produces a natural desire to see God in anyone who considers that there must be a (hidden) First Cause of all effects. The desire depends on a consideration of things that can be naturally known, and does not depend upon being ordered to a supernatural end. This view is the only one that is in harmony with the texts of St. Thomas.[27]

Destructio corruptorii

The wholesale consignment of Cajetan to outer darkness, making him responsible for atheistic humanism by imagining that he held that the human person is self-sufficient and autonomous, leaving only a miraculous opening for the supernatural, fades away before the sober analyses of Feingold and the livelier ones of Gaboriau. If de Lubac got Cajetan's reading of St. Thomas wrong, what is to be said of de Lubac's own understanding of Thomas?

If it is the case that at the bottom of de Lubac's views on the supernatural is a rejection of a pure nature in man, a natural level to which the supernatural is added, a discussion of *natura pura* is indicated.

> Thomas does not at all mean to say that human nature ought to be conceived as normally endowed with a "purely natural" finality and that it is only apt to receive a supernatural finality 'beyond nature' or 'against nature' by a properly miraculous intervention.[28]

The rejection of an end proportionate to human nature separates de Lubac more decisively from St. Thomas than anything else, doubtless because this rejection is at the basis of his thought.

We are called to a supernatural end, to a good that far exceeds anything owed our nature, to the beatific vision, to union with God himself. Those actually in this state can be seen as having realized a potency to be there. This potency is distinguished from natural potencies that have objects proportionate to our nature. Natural potencies in the usual sense are such that the one having them has the means of fulfilling them. A potency to grace and glory is called "obediential" precisely to distinguish it from fully "natural" potencies. There is an extended sense of "natural" according to which

27. Feingold, 297.

28. "Il [Thomas] n'entend pas du tout signifier que la nature humaine doive être concue d'abord comme douée normalement d'une finalité 'purement naturelle' et qu'elle soit seulement apte à recevoir une finalité surnaturelle 'praeter naturam'ou 'contra naturam' par une intervention proprement miraculeuse" (*Le mystère du surnaturel*, 180).

the obediential potency can be called natural. But the obediential potency can only become actual by divine agency. This is not of course the ordinary operation of God in the happenings of creation; natural potencies could neither be nor function without the continuing divine causality. But in the case of obediential potency, God's intervention is needed to raise us up and order us to an end not proportionate with our nature, but far exceeding it. Inclinations follow on form, and the form of the supernatural is grace. Grace, as the word suggests, is gratuitous, unowed, above and beyond what our nature is naturally ordered to. The supernatural, as the word suggests, is added onto the natural.

In de Lubac's account, man no longer has a natural end. His actual call to the vision of God is the basis for a natural potency to achieve that end. It is almost as if for him the supernatural replaces the natural. What motivates him is the fear that talk of pure nature tends to put the supernatural on the back burner, as if everything were more or less all right with us, and the supernatural is a sort of extrinsic add-on. Nor is this fear merely speculative. As a historical matter, he thinks that modern man's view of himself as totally autonomous and in charge, which has led to secularization and atheism, are consequences of the doctrine of a state of nature.[29] The temptation is to think of the natural end as completely sufficient. He fears that "in this context, the supernatural 'loses its unique grandeur,' and ends up by becoming a kind of elevated copy of the natural order. He holds that this has had the effect of encouraging the modern mind to think that it can abandon the supernatural in favor of the natural. Finally, he maintains that it has contributed to the separation of theology from philosophy, obstructing a specifically Christian reflection on man and the world."[30]

It is just this last claim that makes de Lubac relevant to the theme of this book. There are many implications in what de Lubac has written for one's understanding of philosophy and its relation to faith and theology. The disappearance of the ultimate end proportionate to our nature has both practical and theoretical consequences. The very telos of philosophy in its classical sense, in the sense the term has for St. Thomas, seems called into question.

29. *Surnaturel* (Paris, 1946), 153–54. See Feingold, 519.

30. Ibid. Feingold quotes from a letter of de Lubac to Maurice Blondel, a thinker with whom he had much in common.

Given his understanding of how mankind has declined into secularization and atheism, de Lubac's animus against Cajetan is understandable, however unjust. He takes Cajetan to be, if not the inventor, then the propagator of a notion of obediential potency that presupposes a state of nature and thus suggests that we are, in a natural state, autonomous, self-sufficient. What need, then, for the supernatural? And if the supernatural advenes, it will seem extrinsic and incidental. There are two great problems with de Lubac's criticism: first, Cajetan does not say the things de Lubac claims he says; second, it is de Lubac, not Cajetan, who is out of harmony with the teaching of Thomas Aquinas. Since it would be presumptuous of me to enter any more fully into properly theological discussions, I shall keep my discussion on the threshold of the dispute. By common consent his views on *natura pura* are central to de Lubac's argument, so I will take it to be sufficient for our purposes to show that de Lubac is in disagreement with Thomas Aquinas on this crucial issue.

Duplex felicitas hominis

The principles of philosophy are certain truths within the immediate ken of every human person. Such truths are not only theoretical, but practical as well. It is the mark of both that they are *per se nota quoad omnes*. Who could fail to grasp being, since it is grasped in anything we conceive? Who could fail to see that it makes no sense to affirm and deny the same thing at the same time? Who does not know that good is to be done and evil avoided? Augustine said that he had met many men who wished to deceive others, but none who wished to be deceived. That is a good basis for reminding them of the great moral metatruth: you should not do to others what you would not have them do to you.

It is the very modesty and matter-of-factness of this that must have attracted Thomas to Aristotle. Access to these principles is the great binding force in the human community because it puts us in tune with they way things are. These threshold truths have a permanent and pervasive role to play in our search for truth, but of course wonder at the world will lead us beyond the obvious and common to the increasingly difficult. The ultimate end of theoretical reasoning, the quest for causes, for answers to why things are as they are, is knowledge of the First Cause. The telos of philosophy is God and its ultimate inquiries can be called, and were called, theology.

The starting points or principles of practical reasoning are embedded in all our thinking about what to do. These principles are grounded in what we are, in our nature, and are therefore called precepts of natural law.

Let us now imagine such a Christian as Thomas Aquinas confronting this Aristotelian vision of what life is all about. What is he to make of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*? What is he to make of Book Lambda of the *Metaphysics*? In revelation God has revealed himself to us and our relation to him. The things the believer holds to be true about God far exceed the dreams of philosophers and his understanding of the point and ultimate end of human life is very different from what philosophy says on the subject. So what is the relationship between these two, philosophy and faith?

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Early and late, Thomas teaches that there is a twofold end of the intellectual creature. Happiness *(beatitudo, felicitas)* is the word for the perfection of the rational or intellectual creature, and happiness is naturally desired because everyone naturally desires his ultimate perfection.

Ultima autem perfectio rationalis seu intellectualis naturae est duplex. Una quidem, quam potest assequi virtute suae naturae: et haec quodammodo beatitudo vel felicitas dicitur. Unde et Aristoteles perfectissimam hominis contemplationem, qua optimum intelligible, quod est Deus, contemplari potest in hac vita, dicit esse ultimam hominis felicitatem. Sed super hanc felicitatem est alia felicitas quam in futuro expectamus, qua *videbimus Deum sicuti est*.

(Ia, q. 62, a.1)

The ultimate perfection of the rational or intellectual nature is twofold. One that can be attained by the power of its nature, and this is called in a certain way happiness. That is why Aristotle calls the most perfect contemplation of man that by which the highest intelligible, God, can be contemplated in this life. But there is added to this happiness another that we look to in the future, thanks to which "we will see God as he is."

This recognition of a twofold end for man is thematic in the first five questions of the IaIIae of the *Summa theologiae* where Thomas melds what Aristotle had to say about ultimate end with the end that has been revealed. It can of course seem odd to speak of two ultimate ends, and unless we make a vital distinction it is odd. If by ultimate end we mean, as the text just cited tells us, the perfection and fulfillment of a nature, how could there be two of those? What Thomas does is to distinguish the *ratio ultimi finis*, roughly

what we have just given, the complete fulfillment of our will for the good, from what is taken to satisfy that notion. Those of whom St. Paul says that "their god is their belly" try to make the objects of sense appetite fill the requirements of the ultimate end. Attempting this makes one a glutton but it does not make one happy because food and drink alone cannot fulfill our desire for the good. No more can fame or wealth or power. The question thus becomes, What objectively does satisfy the notion of ultimate end?

If Aristotle took his account of what satisfied our ultimate end to be in every way complete, then his teaching would be a rival of the Christian understanding and we would have to choose between the two. The philosopher's teaching on the good for man would have to be accounted false. But clearly Thomas does not consider the philosophical account one that must be rejected by the Christian believer. If Aristotle's account was meant to give a way of completely fulfilling the notion of ultimate end, the believer could of course simply say the philosopher was wrong in this and go on to make use of what Aristotle had written for his own purposes. That is not what Thomas does.

One of the most significant facts about those five questions is the role that a remark by Aristotle on what he had accomplished plays in Thomas's conception of how philosophy and the faith (and the theology based on that faith) complement one another and are not related as contradictories. Thomas seizes on Aristotle's remark in Book 1 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1101a20) that indicates that what has been put before us as satisfying the ultimate end does so only imperfectly.[31] This enables him to say that Aristotle provides a confessedly inadequate account of what satisfies the notion of ultimate end and that this relates to what we have been supernaturally called to as imperfect to perfect. This ensures the continuing importance of the philosophical analysis of human action, something manifest in treatments of such topics as the relation between acquired and infused virtues.

Later we will discuss the similar way in which Thomas takes as complements rather than rivals what the philosopher has to say about God and what God has revealed to us about himself. The development of the notion of a

31. *ST* IaIIae, q. 3, a. 3. Thomas makes the same point in commenting on the text of Aristotle. See Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics": Book One, Lesson 16, n. 202* (South Bend, Ind.: Dumb Ox Books, 1993).

Christian philosophy from the 1930s provided the opportunity to reflect on the relation between philosophy and the faith and many invaluable insights into the character of the believing philosopher and the marks of his philosophizing were made. But an undeniably negative aspect of this discussion was that, in some versions of it, it was difficult to know how Christian philosophy differed from theology. We shall not anticipate that later discussion save to suggest that lurking in de Lubac's criticism of Cajetan and of *natura pura* and his understanding of how it is we have a natural desire for the beatific vision is an implicit wariness about philosophy itself. Indeed, he even suggested that Cajetan was somehow responsible for creating the atmosphere in which philosophers saw their task as antithetical to religious belief. But philosophers need not be deserving of St. Paul's warning to the Colossians: *Videte ne quis vos decipiat per philosophiam*. De Lubac's attitude created an atmosphere in which believers began to question whether philosophy could be an autonomous discipline. Nothing could be more inimical to the notion of *praeambula fidei*. As the Fathers of Vatican I put in in their forthright manner:

> Si quis dixerit, Deum unum et verum, creatorem et Dominum nostrum, per ea quae facta sunt, naturali rationis humanae lumine certo cognosci non posset, anathema sit [If anyone should say that the one true God, our creator and Lord, cannot be known from the things he has made by the light of natural human reason, let him be anathema].

There is of course a complement to this:

> Si quis dixerit, rationem humanam ita independentem esse, ut fides ei a Deo imperari non possit, anathema sit [If anyone should say that human reason is so independent that God cannot demand faith of it, let him be anathema].

Four ~ CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

Signs to Juvisy can be seen along the motorist's nightmare that is the drive from Orly to Paris. Doubtless when the French Société Thomiste met there on September 11, 1933, the town would have been far enough from Paris to provide an appropriate atmosphere for the second of the Journées d'études that the society had sponsored. This time the topic was Christian philosophy, identified as one of the most debated problems among theologians and philosophers in recent years. (The first meeting had been devoted to phenomenology and included Edith Stein as one of the participants.)

The meetings were held, we are told, in the offices of Éditions du Cerf. The list of participants reads like an honor roll of Catholic philosophers, of Thomists, as they likely all thought of themselves. Father Mandonnet, the founder and honorary president was there, his name synonymous with fundamental research into the thought and writings of Thomas Aquinas. Given the preponderance of Dominicans, it could almost have been called "the Dominican Thomistic Society of France." Of the forty-nine participants, twenty-four were members of the Order of Preachers. But there were two Jesuits, one Benedictine, and many secular clergy as well. And there were laymen: Etienne Gilson, already eminent, and Yves Simon, a fledgling Thomist. There were representatives from Louvain: Auguste Mansion, Professor Dopp, and Fernand Van Steenberghen. Monsignore Masnova from the University of the Sacred Heart in Milan was there. Young Father Daniel Callus was there from Oxford University, and Dom Feuling (the Benedictine) from the University of Salzbourg. The list goes on: Chenu, Congar, Delos, Dubarle, Festugière, Forest, Gardeil, Gouhier, Jolivet, Olivier Lacombe, Maquart, Motte, Penido, Sertillanges, Tonneau, and Bruno de Solages, rector of the Catholic Institute at Toulouse. These are names that already were or would soon be household names for students of St. Thomas.[1]

1. *La philosophie chrétienne. Journées d'études de la Sociétè Thomiste* (Juvisy: Éditions du Cerf, 1933).

The opening address was given by the young Father Marie-Dominique Chenu, then in his midthirties and the president of the society. He must figure prominently in any account of the vagaries of twentieth-century Thomism. Just a few short years later, in 1937, he would publish a little history, *Une école de théologie*, of the Dominican House of Studies called the Saulchoir. The reaction to this, within the Dominican Order, brought a cloud over the head of Chenu and had much to do with the subsequent attitude of Gilson toward that order and its tradition of Thomism. We will be returning to this episode, whose rippling effect is still felt.

Father Chenu contrasted the topic of the second meeting with that of the first, characterizing phenomenology as "not without austerity," whereas Christian philosophy carried the happy danger of being too seductive. He recalled the recent seance of the Société française de philosophie[2] which had more or less set the parameters of the problem and Gilson's Gifford Lectures which provided palpable historical instances of the influence of Christianity on philosophy: "l'histoire donne un sens à la notion de philosophie chrétienne" (history provides a meaning for the notion of Christian philosophy). But the conjunction ought not be thought of as merely one of chronology or geography, such as Greek philosophy, Chinese philosophy, Cartesian philosophy, or Kantian phillosophy. The problem of Christian philosophy is only interesting if it indicates an intelligible connection, not just one of fact, between philosophy and Christian faith. The implication of the phrase is that there is an intrinsic influence of faith on philosophy that "whether by objective contributions or in subjective comforts leaves intact before the mind the difference of 'formal objects' between philosophy and theology, but also goes beyond the fortuitous coming together of totally heterogeneous givens."[3] Having relied on Gilson, Chenu now invokes Maritain's distinction between the nature and state of philosophy and suggests that the Christian state of philosophy implies a *liaison intrinsèque*. That, he urges, should be the focus of the meeting.

Two major papers were delivered, in the morning that of Aimé Forest,

2. On this earlier discussion, see Francesca Aran Murphy, *Art and Intellect in the Philosophy of Etienne Gilson* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 114ff.

3. ". . . soit dans les apport objectifs, soit dans les confortations subjectives, laisserait intacte devant l'esprit la différence des 'objets formels' entre philosophie et théologie, mais aussi depasserait la coïncidence fortuite de deux données totalement hétérogènes" (Ibid., 14).

then of the Université de Poitiers, in the afternoon that of Father Motte, professor at the Saulchoir. Each paper was followed by a lively discussion, each of which is valuable for seeing how the question of Christian philosophy polarized the participants.

Forest spoke on the historical problem of Christian philosophy, taking off from the dispute between Emile Bréhier and Etienne Gilson, with particular reference to the latter's *The Spirit of Medieval Philsoophy*.[4] The paper is erudite, providing a leisurely journey from the Middle Ages into the Reform, Pascal, and on to the Chateaubriand of the *Génie du christianisme*: "What the greatest geniuses of Greece discovered only after an ultimate effort of reason is publicly taught at intersections in our cities and the working man can buy for pennies a children's catechism in which are found the most sublime secrets of the ancient sects."[5] The deleterious effects of Deism are recounted, of Voltaire, of Toland, or the Rousseau of the *Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard*, which Forest links to Kant's effort to contain religion within the limits of reason alone. The paper is a *tour de monde*, in short, tracing the varying relationship between philosophy and religious faith, arriving finally at Lammenais and the modernists. His presentation ends with a discussion of Maurice Blondel.

Seemingly not a paper that lent itself easily to discussion, yet Father Festugière remarked at some length on his thoughts on what Christian philosophy had meant for Clement of Alexandria. But his major comment was that he thought a case could be made for the fact that the notion of person and/or of personality is a philosophical gain inseparable from the influence of Christianity. "Nothing in Greek philosophical language corresponds to our concept of personality."[6] Monsignor Bruno de Solages remarked that that seemed proof that under the influence of Christianity philosophy progresses "even in the order of its specification."[7] Professor Jolivet drew attention to his *Essai sur les rapports entre la pensée . . .* in which he compared Plotinus

4. Some years later, Forest contributed "Deux historiens de la philosophie," comparing in some detail Bréhier and Gilson, to *Etienne Gilson. Philosophe de la Chrétienté* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1949), 31–51.

5. *La philosophie chrétienne*, 30.

6. "Rien ne correspond à notre concept de la personnalité dans la langue grecque philosophique" (Ibid., 60).

7. Ibid., 61.

and Augustine. The former was violently opposed to the Christian notion of redemption and to the notion of personality implied in it. How does this square with Father Festugière's suggestion? At this point Father Mandonnet intervened to say that elementary logic makes it clear that the conjunction of "Christian" and "philosophy" comes down to the fact that there have been some Christian philosophers, that is, some Christians who engaged in philosophy, but this is a purely personal matter. The unity is in the subject alone. To think or to argue from the faith is to engage in theology, not philosophy. "Christian philosophy is a Christian philosophical product, if you will, but it does not form a unit. There is no unity possible of philosophy and theology."[8]

This flat-footed position, which Mandonnet would maintain throughout the day, morning and afternoon, brought Gilson to his feet. "I had promised myself not to speak and I certainly don't intend to respond to what has just been said, above all because, if I correctly understand him, there are two Fathers Mandonnet. The first said: Obviously there is a Christian philosophy, because there are Christian philosophers and there can be a unit because it comes about in the person of a philosopher who is at the same time a Christian. I felt myself wholly in agreement with this Father Mandonnet. But I have heard another, the second, who explained to us that, if there is a union in fact, in right there can only be a distinction. I confess that this surprises me a bit. If there are relations of fact between faith and reason, between Revelation and philosophy in the concrete subject—if there are in fact relations, I say that it is impossible that there not be relations of right."[9]

The exchanges between Mandonnet and Gilson throughout the day are the liveliest. The two are at opposite sides on the matter and they dug themselves in progressively. For Mandonnet there may be a *de facto* union of philosophy and faith, but *de iure* there cannot be. For Gilson, if there is a *de facto* union, then it is *de iure*. At one point, Gilson gives an account of the development of his personal views. When he was professor of medieval philosophy at the Sorbonne, he was often asked why he did not set texts of Saint Thomas in the program for the *licence*. But he saw no way to offer a course on the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas when texts of Aristotle were already included

8. Ibid., 63.
9. Ibid., 63–64.

in the program. "I naively thought that Saint Thomas's philosophy was that of Aristotle, crowned by a theology." Why include Thomas when Aristotle was already there? But there came a time when he asked himself if there were not considerable differences between Aristotle and Saint Thomas. An affirmative answer led to the recognition that he had something to teach, namely, the philosophy of Saint Thomas, which is not that of Aristotle. Of course if one interpreted Aristotle through the eyes of Saint Thomas, he would tend to think that there was no divergence between the teaching of the two men. "Consequently, I think that at the bottom of our discussion there is a fundamental disagreement between those who deny the influence of Christian revelation on the exercise of reason and those who admit it, but that there is a fundamental agreement between those who admit the influence of revelation and accept the expression Christian philosophy and vice versa."[10] It is the fact of this influence that is important, however, not the phrase. Mandonnet replied that what the phrase "Christian philosophy" covers is what Augustine meant by it, namely, revelation.

Bruno de Solages wanted to know if Gilson would see the influence of Christianity in the same way as a great philosopher or philosophical school might introduce something in philosophy that could not have come about in any other way. Gilson said he would distinguish truths that reason could never discover from those it can, and would put philosophical influence into this second category. "But what Saint Justin, Saint Augustine, and Saint Hilary discovered was something rational that came to them from an extrarational source. It was astonishment, better admiration, the mark of which one often finds in their writings—even with Saint Thomas, one could say that he believed in the *Ego sum qui sum* of the Bible before transforming the proofs of Aristotle in order to derive from them the demonstration of the existence of the Christian God. In short, faith proposes solutions for which philosophy sometimes later finds a demonstration."[11]

Mandonnet, apparently seeing here a reference to *praeambula fidei*, remarks that faith is needed by those who cannot grasp the demonstrations. Gilson replies that Thomas has learned the true nature of God from faith, not from Aristotle, and it his existence he seeks to prove. Reason is confront-

10. Ibid., 65–67.
11. Ibid., 70.

ed by the presence of something partially assimilable. That gives rise to theology, Mandonnet replies. "Theology!" Gilson cries. "It's more complicated than that. There is an essential difference between the attitude of the theologian who is concerned with the revealed datum and asks reason what revelation is, and the attitude of the philosopher which is in the rational order and asks of faith for what might enrich the knowledge of reason. Theology does not demonstrate its conclusions philosophically, philosophy does not deduce its conclusions from the faith. The fact that reason and faith play roles in theology and in philosophy in no way implies that they play the same roles. The conclusion of the theologian is always from the revealed, whatever appeal he makes to reason; that of the philosopher is always of the rationally demonstrated, whatever appeal it makes to faith. It is only in those cases where revelation bears on truths that would be otherwise accessible to natural reason that the theologian can become a bit of a philosopher and undertake the demonstration of the revealed datum. That is what Saint Thomas does in demonstrating God's existence."[12]

Mandonnet first wonders whether such proofs ever convince very many, but then denies that Christian revelation ever provoked philosophical progress. Gilson wants to know where the concept of creation came from. The answer he gives his own question is Genesis.

The morning ends with these two great historians having established themselves at opposite poles on the question before them.

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The afternoon paper by Father A.-R. Motte was entitled "Toward a Doctrinal Solution of the Problem of Christian Philosophy." He has been persuaded by Gilson's claim that philosophy has been influenced by Christianity. His task is to place that historical reality in the light of essential causes (this is the bulk of the paper, comprising its first five sections) and then he will show how the phrase "Christian philosophy" takes on an intelligible meaning against this background.

It is somewhat startling to see Motte describe his task as a kind of transcendental deduction: "[I]t remains to lead this fact back to its causes, and that is not at all to say its antecedents and consequences in the order of be-

12. Ibid., 70–71.

coming, but to its intimate raison d'être, to the apriori conditions of its possibility."[13] The reference is not to the structure of reason and its apriori requirements, however, but rather to the Christian *weltenschauung*. Motte suggests that we forget for the moment distinctions between philosophy and theology, natural and supernatural, and look at the world with the eye of faith and take into account the integral reality thus revealed. It is the unity of the viewpoint Motte insists upon and then distinctions of the kind just mentioned can be seen as made *within* the comprehensive view. Thomism, with its teaching of two wisdoms, has a particular stake in the problem before us: How can two distinct wisdoms make up one entity? How can it provide a philosophical openness to the Christian light in order that it might reenforce what is proper to philosophy?

The world Thomas Aquinas lives in is one in which man has been called to the supernatural order. The distinction between reason and faith, between the natural and the supernatural, do not disturb this whole. "For Saint Thomas there are not two compartments of being, two creations, the second of which by improvisation comes to the help of the first; there are not two final ends, one for natural man, the other for man raised to the supernatural level, no more than there are two gods, a natural God and a triune supernatural God, but one and the same God, whose nature is precisely to transcend all nature and to burst into a trinity."[14] Man is made for grace and the beatific vision.[15] Although grace is a complement to nature added from without, it is nonetheless an essential element in the concrete plan of predestination. Without grace, man cannot enjoy the privileges of his own nature.[16] In short, the supernatural organization of the world is a fact and for St. Thomas the enclosing of nature within a higher order acquires a *de iure* value.

The supernatural thus answers to a kind of structural necessity, as is clear, Motte says, from Thomas's description of the final end of our rational nature.

13. "[I]l reste à ramener ce fait à ses causes, et c'est-à-dire non point à ses antécédents et conséquents dans l'ordre du devenir, mais à sa raison d'être intime, aux conditions *a priori* de sa possibilité" (Ibid., 75). Motte's contribution runs from p. 75 to p. 113.

14. Ibid., 78.

15. Motte cites *Q. D. de veritate* q. 14, a. 10: "Ab ipsa prima institutione natura humana est ordinata in finem beatitudinis—non quasi in finem debitum homini secundum naturam ejus, sed ex sola divina liberalitate."

16. *ST* Ia, q. 8, a. 4.

"Insofar as rational nature knows the universal nature of good and being it has an immediate order to the universal principle of being; the perfection of the rational creature, therefore, does not consist only in that which belongs to it given its nature, but also in that which is attributed to it by a supernatural participation in divine goodness."[17] Motte's main point is that wisdom is one: integral reality answers to a wisdom that can only be one. "Saint Thomas saw this better than anyone. But in explaining for us the law according to which nature and grace unite without being confused with one another in the total order of providence, he has also perhaps at the same time furnished us a precious key to resolve the problem of the Christian influence on philosophy without touching the just aspirations of philosophy."[18]

Reason as such is insufficient to gain the vision of integral reality Motte has put before us. Philosophy is essentially inadequate because it cannot grasp things beyond its range, and there is more in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in any philosophy. How, then, can philosophical wisdom fail to distort reality? If it takes for everything what is not everything, it is a snare and a delusion. "The autonomy of philosophy must therefore be legitimated. From the unity of being, we must come to a distinction of points of view. At least, knowing that on the side of the real the bridges are not blown, let us understand that revelation and philosophy, as distinct as they are, can encounter one another."[19]

Motte now turns to the famous claim "*est autem in his quae de Deo confitemur duplex veritatis modus*" (truth with respect to the things we say of God is of two kinds).[20] Our mind is such that its activity depends on what is first grasped by the senses; what we think about is either the nature of sensi-

17. *ST* IaIIae, q. 2, a. 3: "Natura rationalis, in quantum cognoscit universalem boni et entis rationem, habet immediatum ordinem ad universale essendi principium; perfectio ergo rationalis creaturae non solum consistit in eo quod ei competit secundum suam naturam, sed in eo etiam quod ei attribuitur ex quadam supernaturali participatione divinae bonitatis." In a note to p. 82, Motte adds: "Il va de soi que la nature et l'existence même de ce secours surnaturel ne peuvent se déduire philosophiquement. Du moins sa possibilité est-elle certainement contenue dans la toute-puissance divine: Saint Thomas le prouve par l'absurde au moyen du fameux argument du désir naturel de connaître [cf. *Bulletin Thomiste* (1932): 651–76]. Il n'en faut pas davantage pour que le philosophe, dès là qu'il pose Dieu, réserve comme possible tout un ordre de participation surnaturelle du crée à l'incrée. Mais nous ne nous limitons pas ici au point de vue du philosophe."

18. *La philosophie chrétienne*, 82.

19. Ibid., 84.

20. *Summa contra gentes* I, 3.

ble reality or that which can only be known with reference to sensible reality. The sensible world, as the effect of God, leads to knowledge of him, but the richness of the cause is infinitely impoverished in the being of its effect and the world cannot enable us to gain access to God's proper being. It is this defect that deprives philosophy of its claim to be the sovereign wisdom.

Is unbaptized reason, then, incapable of truth? Saint Thomas doesn't think so and that is the point of his *duplex veritatis modus*. There are limits to what unaided reason can do, but within those limits it is capable of astonishing accomplishments. "The human intellect has a form, namely, the intelligible light itself, which is in itself sufficient for knowing some intelligible things, namely, those to knowledge of which we can arrive through sensible things."[21] So it is not a matter of everything or nothing. Knowledge need not be exhaustive in order to be true. To abstract is not to lie.

Motte sketches the panorama of the philosophical sciences, first the speculative and then the practical. The formal differences of object establish distinctions among the former. What of the practical order? Does man's supernatural destiny rule out any moral science of a philosophical nature? No. We can disengage the common conditions of action, those that do not touch on the concrete individuality of the subject but on the very structure of man and the general conditions of his destiny. There is, accordingly, in dependence on a philosophical anthropology, a science of action, speculative in mode although practical with regard to its end. Of this science, the notions of happiness and of end, of the voluntary, of good and evil, of virtue and law, will be the chief concerns enabling it to clarify human conduct and orient it to the good.[22] Nonetheless, morality makes the problem keener: there is an obvious insufficiency in a moral science that ignores the supernatural and this recognition seems to call philosophy in general into question.

In a discussion that might be called the *grandeur et la misère* of philosophy, Motte draws attention to the aspirations and the limitations of natural reason. "From the mystery of the divine being the limits of philosophical knowledge flow: creation, obediential potency, the angelic world, ultimate

21. *ST* IaIIae, q. 109, a. 1: "Intellectus humanus habet aliquam formam, scilicet ipsum lumen intelligibile, quod est de se sufficiens ad quaedam intelligibilia cognoscenda, ad ea scilicet in quorum notitiam per sensibilia possumus devenire."

22. Ibid., 87.

finality and eschatology and the interpretation of history mark the points where reason sees its object escaping it."[23] Motte concludes from this to philosophical pluralism. "In short, although the sciences have a true existence and represent bodies of universal truths that impose themselves on all (and are moreover susceptible of growth), philosophy does not exist, there are only philosophies and philosophers who reflect on the same problems but do not arrive at solutions on the basis of evidence that conquers all minds. The contradictions and groping of the history of philosophy shows more than the history of any science that these are not accidental facts: they respond to a fundamental difficulty, which comes from the very object of philosophy."[24]

Motte goes on talking about philosophy in the singular after he has denied it is any one thing, and perhaps this indicates that the denial was an exaggeration In any case, the plea for pluralism does not follow from what he has said.

Clearly, philosophy and revelation do not meet as equals, and so philosophy confronts a choice. It might simply surrender its autonomy or, remaining free, receive from revelation what it can be given without losing its nature. The first choice is in effect to become theology; the second, if it results in a true philosophy, will be one that can be called "Christian." Motte enters into an extended discussion of theology, in which philosophy is put to the service of the faith. The question then becomes: If philosophy in the old sense can still go on, will the Christian engage in it? "Supposing a Christian who philosophizes, who means to do pure and authentic philosophy, can he and his speculation not be affected with a quite specific sign? That is the problem."[25] And it is one Motte now feels ready to solve.

Forget about the moral conditions of philosophizing, which are certainly not negligible, but which are common to any human activity. There may be a moral way to do mathematics, but is there a Christian way that would lead to talk of "Christian mathematics"? Unlikely. There must be something about philosophy, something about its essential conditions, that makes it susceptible to a Christian influence.

23. Ibid., 93.
24. Ibid., 94.
25. Ibid., 98.

It is in virtue of an internal necessity, we would say, that human philosophy is incapable of getting to the bottom of its proper object. The invincible instability of analogical notions, the even more invincible obscurity of its first and principal analogate, God, limit the competence of philosophy, casting a shadow over its evidence and making its certitudes ever precarious. An appetite for perfection is thus latent at the very heart of philosophy and this is precisely the reason that it remains radically open to an influence—if one there be—that would come just to complete its proper lights and reenforce its proper certainties. The possibility of Christian philosophy finds its deep explanation there, beyond the contingencies of history.[26]

Taking philosophy in the sense of metaphysics, Motte reminds us of how difficult it is to lay hold of its subject, being as being, even for Aristotle. "Judeo-Christian revelation in naming God 'He who is' and in making the world depend on him to the depths of its being, imposed this point of view right off and by that fact truly gave metaphysics to itself."[27]

Here is an example of a Thomist purporting to defend the Thomistic point of view who radically departs from the teaching of Thomas Aquinas. What Motte has just said makes sense only if we think that Aristotle failed to assign a first cause of the being of things. But this is precisely his achievement, according to Thomas Aquinas. If Thomas is right, Motte's plea for a constituitive influence of Christianity with respect to metaphysics has to be rejected. Of course this lapse is not peculiar to Motte; it comes to characterize the Thomism that develops in the wake of the Christian philosophy controversy.

When Motte goes on to see analogy and its application to metaphysics as a Christian deliverance, it becomes even clearer that the niceties of historical accuracy have been left behind. That Christian revelation tells us massively more about God than philosophy could discover, that the angelic universe receives a detailed characterization on the basis of revelation quite beyond anything philosophical—all this is of course true. But what is not made clear by Motte is whether this additional knowledge is intrinsically dependent on revelation or not.

26. Ibid., 99.
27. Ibid., 99.

If there is need for a higher light in order adequately to do metaphysics, this need is even more pressing in the moral order. The mystery of God shows up at the term of the speculative order, but in the practical order he is encountered at the outset in the ultimate end: "Moral philosophy being more hampered than the other parts of philosophy, a complete doctrine of human conduct can be asked only of theology, which alone is informed of man's supernatural vocation."[28] From this Motte concludes that moral philosophy must draw on the faith. That is, knowing by faith that man is called to the beatific vision, the Christian philosopher more easily grasps that man's end is knowledge of God. Nonetheless, Motte explicitly rejects Maritain's notion of moral philosophy adequately considered![29]

"It is easy," Motte observes, "to go to the end of philosophy, by reason, when one can go by faith farther still. On the contrary, it is difficult to go to the end of philosophy when one cannot go beyond, for one runs the risk of misunderstanding or misplacing that *beyond,* and to the degree that one has not situated it he has not gone to the term of philosophy, the science of the ultimate."[30] The man of faith is not only someone who knows other things, he is someone who knows otherwise and better because he is better disposed toward the things he knows. He enjoys thanks to his faith a kind of connaturality with them.

Motte suggests that it makes no difference whether we think of Christian philosophy as implied by Christian wisdom and artificially disengageable by projection onto a rational plane or as pure philosophy undergoing in its proper effort of elaboration the Christian influence. In either case, it is the intrinsic weakness at the heart of philosophy that Christian revelation providentially comes to the aid of. He calls this an essential modification of philosophical work.

28. "[D]e ce fait la philosophie morale se trouve plus entravée encore que les autres parties de la philosophie: une doctrine achevée de la conduite humaine ne peut être demandée qu'à la théologie, seule informée de la vocation surnaturelle de l'homme" (Ibid., 102–3).

29. "Au surplus la 'philosophie morale adéquatement prise' subalternée à la théologie, que M. Maritain place entre la théologie morale et la morale strictement philosophique [*De la philosophie chrétienne* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1933), 108–66] semble difficile à concevoir, le schème classique de la subalternation pouvant malaisément chevaucher deux plans d'intelligibilité aussi distincts que celui de la foi et celui de la raison philosophique" (Ibid., 103, n. 1).

30. Ibid., 104.

Despite its flaws, Motte's presentation is as clear and persuasive an account as one finds in the literature on Christian philosophy of the 1930s. What did the others at Juvisy make of it?

The remarks of Father Sertillanges are of particular interest. If we wish to see philosophy under the sway of faith, he observes, we have it in theology. And it is perfectly intelligible for one to say that what he means by Christian philosophy is the role philosophy plays in theology. Of course then philosophy would lose its autonomy, but the believer can allow that an autonomous philosophy may be desirable to us but, for himself, he prefers to identify his philosophy with the Gospel. The difficulty that Sertillanges himself sees with this is that it is a retrogression, taking us back to the way things were before Thomas Aquinas. It involves neglecting the profound work realized by Thomas in discriminating reason and faith and clarifying their interrelations. And it would effectively cut Christian philosophers off from the rest of the thinking world.

What precisely distinguishes the attitudes of the theologian and the philosopher? Sertillanges cites three marks mentioned by Thomas.[31]

1. The theologian treats God for himself and all other things with reference to God; the philosopher treats nature and man for themselves and of God only as their cause. Call this a matter of the object, the material object of the two.

2. The theologian treats the properties of things that refer them to God, the philosopher treats the properties of things in themselves and as they are. Call this a difference of formal object, but of the formal object *quod;* still the formal object *quo,* the *ratio sub qua,* the matter of principles, is also involved. Thus if the theologian and the philosopher should study the same things, they do so in the light of different principles; the philosopher, through their proper causes, the theologian with recourse to the first cause.

3. In terms of method, the philosopher first studies nature and man, and then through knowledge of them comes to knowledge of the first cause. But theology begins with God, who is both its first object and its light, and then goes on to creatures that emanate from God and are related to him.

31. *Summa contra gentes* II, 3. The intervention by Father Sertillanges runs from p. 115 through p. 122.

Very well. Sertillanges wants to know why the Christian thinker as philosopher should not follow exactly the procedure laid down here by Thomas, that is, begin with nature and man and go on to the point where theology begins, namely, God, while taking the data of faith as facts in the way he takes the data of experience as facts.

Sertillanges thinks that this is what Malebranche did and, in our own time, Gabriel Marcel. Sertillanges does not think that such a thinker must be numbered among theologians. He holds in common with the theologian the dogmas that he holds as a believer, but he can be a believer and remember it in his science without ceasing to be a philosopher—so long as he does not confuse object, method, and principles.

Sertillanges is surprised that Maritain, who rejected this at the outset, embraced it when it was a matter of moral philosophy. He finds that illogical.[32] Either the whole of philosophy is dependent on theology, or none of it. But the real dynamism of action and the deep exigencies of willing suffice to establish the deficiency of a purely natural moral theory. How does Father Sertillanges see Christian philosophy unfold?

Take the discussion of man's end in the *Summa contra gentes*. When Thomas begins the discussion, he knows of the beatific vision only through faith and could appeal to it only as a theologian, but he finds need of it as a pure Aristotelian, so to say, as he studies, taking off from the laws of action in general, the dynamism of human activity in quest of happiness, something that can only be found in its perfect form in God seen intuitively. If this conclusion were affirmative of the fact of the beatific vision, it could only be theological, because we are here in the presence of the gratuitous and superhuman. "But this term, philosophically hypothetical, has nonetheless guided the research and allowed, at the end, to the benefit of one who is both believing and a philosopher, a harmonious synthesis of knoweldge, although with elements of a different order."[33]

32. "Si la foi seule peut nous fournir notre fin réele et nos réelles conditions existentiels—motifs invoqués par M. Maritain—c'est parce que la foi seule manifeste aussi notre lien réel, nos réels rapports avec notre Principe, tellement que toute systématisation, qu'elle soit théorique or pratique, ne peut s'achever réellement, je veux dire avec une portée réelle et décisive, que par l'effort combiné de la philosophie et de la foi. Qu'on songe que, pour saint Thomas, la providence même ne se démontre pas en philosophie!" (Ibid., 118).

33. Ibid., 119.

He goes on to suggest a more radical form of Christian philosophy that involves at once the need for autonomy on the part of philosophy and a need for connection on the side of faith. He is thinking of the Blondelian view that, however insufficient philosophy may be to discern, let alone reach it, the very first principles of philosophy direct it toward the supernatural. *Sanatio in radice*. Sertillanges speaks of an orientation in the manner of a permanent quest and quasi-demand that follows from the fact that reality is, after all, a unified whole. Of course we can look at philosophy only from the point of view of what is from nature, but it is not complete if it is not aware of its incompleteness, however incapable it may be of stating what would complete the quest.

The abiding tension between believers and philosophers is the tendency of philosophy to regard itself as self-sufficient and as wisdom while the believer knows philosophical wisdom is only partial. The philosopher is likely to regard faith as apriori unacceptable, as too much to ask—or at least as something that can be ignored. Believers can operate with the faith but we philosophers must be content with philosophy. "Combating this position within philosophy, by showing its insufficiency and lures to the faith it offers of itself, is a far more fundamental effort of Christian philosophy if not more profound than that which deals with the partial objective benefits and subjective reinforcement that comes to philosophy in a Christian setting."[34]

But he is not done. He goes on to agree with Mandonnet that strictly speaking there cannot be a Christian philosophy! The influence of Christianity on philosophy can be assigned to the order of discovery; but in the order of demonstation, either the argument is good or it isn't. For example, Thomas believes in creation. When he goes on to demonstrate it, he is holding it on that basis. So Christianity might inspire the philosopher, but so can poetry. But he is willing to call that philosophy Christian which is in fact stimulated by the faith, whether objectively or subjectively. Such a philosophy might live in a Christian setting but there is nothing Christian in its very notion.

What of a philosophy that just ignores Christianity? Well, it will be incomplete and truncated. "It would even be a teaching falsified as a whole if it does not contain the mystical tendencies mentioned earlier. In any case, it is not the *opus perfectum rationis* of which Saint Thomas speaks."

34. Ibid., 120.

Well, Sertillanges is all over the lot. His position becomes more obscure in a subsequent exchange with Father Chenu. At this point, Dom Feuling makes an intervention that will figure in Edith Stein's discussion of Christian philosophy.[35] He suggests talking about the philosophizing of the Christian rather than of Christian philosophy but goes on to give three senses of the term.

By the end of the day, repetition set in, unsurprisingly. What has been the upshot of the discussion?

Christianity has provided food for thought to the philosopher. Topics are taken up that would not have been if it had not been for the influence of the faith.

The faith animates the believer through and through and thus exercises an influence on his philosophizing. Perhaps when one loses heart in formulating a proof for the existence of God, he is encouraged to go on by reflecting on Romans 1:19. The certainty of faith prompts him to continue looking for the evidence of philosophy.

While some of the participants come close to saying that in Christian philosophy there are some truths held because they have been revealed or on the basis of their having been revealed, there is no formal assertion of this. Indeed, whenever Maritain's notion of moral philosophy adequately considered is mentioned it is regarded as pure theology.

Gilson, the liveliest voice at the meeting, has persuaded everyone of the historical fact of the influence of the faith on philosophy. But to admit this is a far cry from holding that there is a continuing formal, objective dependence of philosophy on the faith.

What is and is not confronted is the idea that philosophy in the standard sense is an activity that takes place without any analogue of the Christian influence that occupies the participants. Philosophy that seeks to be autonomous is said to conceal its own inadequacy from the philosopher. But whence comes this antecedent desire for autonomy? What are the existential conditions for philosophizing *tout court*, however they might differ between believers and nonbelievers?[36]

35. See *Finite and Eternal Being*, trans. Kurt F. Reinhardt, in *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, Vol. 9 (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2002), 12–29. Her main guide in the matter is Jacques Maritain.

36. See my *Thomism in an Age of Renewal* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 76ff.

Clearly it is not easy to understand what is meant by the autonomy of philosophy in some versions of Christian philosophy. From the point of view of our interest, the *praeambula fidei*, it is easy to see how confidence in it was weakened by some versions of Christian philosophy. If the influence of Scripture is needed in order to fashion a proof of a first cause of all being, it is difficult to see how the *praeambula fidei* can function in the way Vatican I understood them to function. The contrast suggested between philosophizing and philosophy is surely the most promising of a satisfactory solution. Maritain distinguished philosophy from its state, and Josef Pieper would distinguish "philosophy" and "philosophizing." Anyone, believer or nonbeliever, who philosophizes is influenced by a host of existential factors, in most cases unnoticed (and then philosophy tends to be described as unanchored pure reason rather than as the activity of a flesh-and-blood human being). After Kierkegaard, it becomes increasingly thoughtless to ignore these factors. For the believer, the faith that is at the core of his being, a virtue of the speculative intellect, animates, or should, his every activity, most emphatically including philosophizing. His research projects are inevitably guided by that faith, by the Magisterium, by the long tradition of Catholic philosophy. Such existential influences are not peculiar to him, since every philosopher comes to the table with decades of lived experience, hunches, and opinions gained from he knows not where if he acknowledges them at all. The first step in discussing Christian philosophy thus must be an awareness of the *common* existential conditions of philosophizing. Then the influence of faith will be seen as a special case of a common and ineluctable factor, but with the added benefit, as many of the interlocutors at Juvisy pointed out, of facilitating the philosophical task. For the believer to regard the faith as an impediment is surely churlish. For all that, and this was Mandonnet's point, a philosophical argument, whatever its existential provenance, cannot include as the condition of its acceptability revealed truth. When that is forgotten, or smudged, the status of the *praeambula fidei* is affected and a task that can be undertaken by nonbeliever and believer alike is described as the concern of the believer alone, and intrinsically dependent for its success on faith.

Five ~ THE CHENU CASE

When religious orders were expelled from France in 1904, the Benedictines and the Jesuits retreated to channel islands, while the French Dominicans moved into Belgium to a place called Le Saulchoir near Tournai. It was there that generations of French Dominicans were formed. Among the later notables of the community were Fathers Gardeil, Roland-Gosselin, and Mandonnet, one of the giants of medieval studies. In 1936, the rector of the Faculty of Theology there was the youngish Marie-Dominique Chenu who a few years earlier, at Juvisy, as president of the French Thomist Society, was a defining presence of its annual meeting that was devoted to the topic of Christian philosophy.

Ordained in 1919, Chenu received his doctorate from the Angelicum in Rome where he studied under one of the most imposing French Dominicans of the twentieth century, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, the priest who gave the annual retreat at Meudon for those gathered by Jacques Maritain into the Cercle d'études thomistes. Chenu returned to the Saulchoir from Rome in 1920 where the following year an Institute for Medieval Studies was founded. His first article was published in 1922, the year Gilson published *Le thomisme*. In 1924, the *Bulletin thomiste* was founded at the Saulchoir. Over the next years, Father Chenu published a piece on theology as a science in the thirteenth century and on early Thomism at Oxford, establishing himself as an authority in medieval thought. He wrote an article linking the theological method of his contemporary at the Saulchoir, Father Gardeil, with that of Melchior Cano, a Spanish Dominican who took part in the Council of Trent. His *Introduction to the Study of St. Thomas* helped generations of fledgling Thomists in their approach to the Common Doctor. His election as president of the Thomist Society was a recognition of his prominence as a scholar. On March 7, 1936, Father Chenu gave a lecture in which he traced the history of the Paris province of the Dominican Order that had

been transplanted to Belgium. It was expanded and published for private distribution the following year. In the meantime the Saulchoir had been raised to the status of a pontifical university with Chenu as its first rector. *Une école de théologie* was to blight Chenu's career. It was severely criticized within the order and in Rome. Chenu was eventually summoned to Rome, where he signed ten propositions clarifying his meaning, but the little book, which would have been a collector's item even then, was put on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1942 and Chenu was removed as rector of the Saulchoir.

A School of Theology

The case of Father Chenu has become one of the set pieces of post–Vatican II theology, as often as not recalled with rueful gratitude that, after the council, the things Chenu had written and that drew down upon him the wrath of the authorities in Rome were now accepted as commonplaces of Catholic doctrine. Here is how a historian of the event has described the dominating spirit in Rome at the time: "Occupied above all with the safety of doctrine, one was traumatized by modernist immanentism, one clung to neo-Thomism to the point of practically identifying it with orthodoxy, one sought objective links between the ideas discussed rather than situate them in their respective contexts and thus to specify their originality: one did dogma, not history."[1] This attempt at an objective description conveys much of the spirit of post–Vatican II Catholic intellectual life: amusement at concern with orthodoxy, an assumption that modernism was a false alarm, condescension toward Thomism, and the assumption that dogma must be seen as the product of history. How did it look from Rome?

When Chenu was asked to come to Rome to discuss and clarify what he had written, his little book was not a household word even in theological houses. If there was such a reaction from Rome, it would doubtless have been connected with the fact that the Saulchoir was now a pontifical institution

1. "Etant surtout préoccupé de la sûreté des doctrines, on y reste traumatisé par l'immanentisme moderniste; on s'attache au néothomisme au point de l'identifier pratiquement avec orthodoxie; on cherche des liens objectifs entre les idées discutées plutôt que de les situer dans leurs contextes respectifs et de préciser ainsi leur originalité: on y fait de la 'dogmatique,' non de l'histoire" (R. Guelley, *Les antécédents de l'encyclique "Humani Generis" dans les sanctions Romaines de 1942: Chenu, Charlier, Draguet* [Paris, 1990], 430).

and the Holy See held a special responsibility for what was taught in such institutions. In the course of the discussions, Chenu was asked to accept ten propositions that can be taken to express the misgivings of those who had called him to Rome:

1. Dogmatic formulas express absolute and immutable truth.

2. True and certain prepositions, whether in philosophy or in theology, are firm and in no way fragile.

3. Sacred Tradition does not create new truths, but it must be firmly held that the deposit of revelation, or the complexus of truths divinely revealed, was complete at the death of the last apostle.

4. Sacred theology is not some spirituality that finds instruments adequate to its religious experience, but is a true science, blessed by God, acquired by study, whose principles are the articles of faith and also all the revealed truths to which the theologian by divine faith, if only with *fides informis*, adheres.

5. Different theological systems with respect to the things on which they disagree are not simultaneously true.

6. It is glorious for the Church to have the system of St. Thomas as especially orthodox, that is, especially conformed to the truths of faith.

7. It is necessary to demonstrate theological truths through Sacred Scripture and Tradition, and also to illustrate their nature and ultimate basis by the principles and doctrine of St. Thomas.

8. Although St. Thomas was properly a theologian, he was also properly a philosopher; consequently in its intelligibility and truth his philosophy does not depend on his theology, and it enunciates absolute, not merely relative, truths.

9. It is especially necessary for the theologian in the scientific process to apply the metaphysics of St. Thomas and diligently attend to the rules of dialectic.

10. Concerning other approved writings and doctors one should show reverence in the way one speaks and writes about them, even if they are found to be defective in certain things.[2]

2. Translated from the Latin as given by Guelluy, "Les antécédents," 461, n. 2:
(1) Formulae dogmaticae enunciant veritatem absolutam et immutabilem.

Perhaps contributing to the wariness with which Chenu was regarded was his closeness to the Young Christian Worker Movement, the Jocists, whose chaplains had begun to meet at Saulchoir in 1925. Perhaps. But what had Chenu said in the little book that was to cost him so much?

In an opening chapter, Chenu gives us a sketch of the way studies were organized in the Order of Preachers and then traces the history of the Dominicans in France from the establishment in 1217 of a house of studies in Paris on the rue St. Jacques to its removal to Belgium and return to France in 1936. Turning to the present, Chenu observes that such Dominicans as Gardeil and Mandonnet were open to contemporary intellectual currents in much the same way as thirteenth-century Dominicans in Paris had been. The theologians mentioned were said to be eager to receive into theology the various methods of contemporary thought. To do this is to return to the first generation of Dominicans in Paris, bypassing the commentators with their hardened positions. The historical method employed in biblical studies by Father Lagrange in Jerusalem could serve as a model. Finally, the intellectual life is nourished by a fervent spiritual life.

Chapter 3 deals with theology and Chapter 4 with philosophy. Since I intend to eschew discussion of the specifically theological, to the degree this

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(2) Propositiones verae et certae, sive in philosophia sive in theologia, firmae sunt et nullo modo fragiles.

(3) Sacra Traditio novas veritates non creat, sed firmiter tenendum est depositum revelationis, seu complexum veritatum divinitus revelatarum, clausum fuisse morte ultimi apostoli.

(4) Sacra Theologia non est quaedam spiritualitas quae invenit instrumenta suae experientiae religiose adequata; sed est vera scientia, Deo benedicente, studio acquisita, cuius principia sunt articuli Fidei et etiam omnes veritates revelatas quibus theologus fide divina, saltem informi, adhaeret.

(5) Varia systema theologica, quoad ea in quibus ab invicem dissentiunt, non sunt simul vera.

(6) Gloriosum est Ecclesiam habere systema S. Thomae tamquam valde orthodoxum, i.e. veritatibus Fidei valde conforme.

(7) Necesse est veritates theologicas per S. Scripturam et Traditionem demonstrare, necnon earum naturam et intimam rationem principiis et doctrina S. Thomae illustrare.

(8) S. Thomas, etsi proprie theologus, proprie etiam philosophus fuit; proinde, philosophia eius in sua intelligibilitate et veritate non pendet ab eius theologia, nec enunciat veritates mere relativas sed absolutas,

(9) Theologo in processu scientifico suo valde necessarium est metaphysicam S. Thomae adhibere et ad regulas dialecticae diligenter attendere.

(10) De aliis scriptoribus et doctoribus probatis servandum est moderamen reverentiae in modo loquendi et scribendi, etiamsi in quibusdam defectuosi inveniatur.

is possible, I turn to the chapter devoted to philosophy. "The chapter on theology is followed by one that treats philosophy. This inversion of the order in which studies unfold is not fortuitous. The pages devoted to philosophy continue the denunciation made apropos of theology of the modern rupture between spirituality and speculation. M.-D. Chenu declines to discuss the relation of reason to faith as of two worlds external to one another: however, he forcefully affirms the scientific autonomy of the rational methods intrinsic to believing philosophical reflection. The doctrine of the relation between grace and nature is the foundation of this appeal."[3]

In this chapter, Chenu condemns the "conceptualism" of modern Scholasticism, the product of a reaction against the Renaissance and the Reformation. And, a novelty, he makes the claim that Christian Wolff exercised a baleful influence on modern Scholasticism. Furthermore, he insists on creativity which finds it source in the attitude of faith. Faith is said to be the point of departure of philosophy as well as of theology. And Thomas? The Dominican fidelity to St. Thomas Aquinas is far more a question of a common spirit that takes the place of propositions and methods. It is something other than "a prolonged Aristotelianism."[4]

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What wider importance could a little book not meant for commerical publication have, a book that few knew of at the time, and which for some forty years after being put on the Index should have sunk into even deeper obscurity? How could it possibly have the influence of a Gilson or a de Lubac on the conception of philosophy that provides a habitat for the *praeambula fidei*? Father Chenu continued to publish very influential work in medieval intellectual history but increasingly the center of gravity of his life swung ever more decisively to the active life. He had insisted that theoretical work

3. "Le chapitre sur la théologie est suivie par celui qui traite de la philosophie. Cette inversion de l'ordre dans lequel se déroulent les études n'est pas un hasard. Les pages consacrées à la philosophie continuent la dénonciation faite, à propos de la théologie, de la rupture moderne entre spiritualité et spéculation. M.-D. Chenu se refuse à considerer les rapports de la raison et de la foi come ceux de deux mondes extérieurs l'un à l'autre: cependant, il affirme avec force l'autonomie scientifique des méthodes rationelles à l'intérieur de la reflexion philosophique croyant. La doctrine des rapports entre grâce et nature est le fondement de cette requête" (Guelluy, "Les antécédents," 433).

4. G. Alberigo, M.-D. Chenu, E. Fouilloux, J.-P. Jossua, and J. Ladrière, *Une ècole de thèologie*, with a preface by René Rémond (Paris, 1985) *Une école de théologie*, 165.

could only make sense when grounded in the historical context from which it had come. Applied to the contemporary world, that came to mean that the events of contemporary history provided the data on which the theologian was to reflect. Father Chenu became deeply involved in the worker priest movement after World War II and, when the Second Vatican Council opened in 1962, Chenu was there as an invited theological expert to advise the conciliar fathers.[5]

It was Chenu's role in the council and the conviction of many that Vatican II was the vindication of the views for which he had been silenced and his little book condemned that explains Chenu's continuing role in the discussions that interest us here. To generations of medievalists, of course, Marie-Dominique Chenu is a household name. Doubtless the vast majority of those who have profited from his work in medieval intellectual history have no notion of his ecclesiastical trials and tribulations.

The greatest impetus to the renewal of interest in Chenu's *Une école de théologie* was its appearance in Italian translation in 1982, accompanied by a number of laudatory essays.[6] A few years later, those essays accompanied the reprint of the French original along with a 1985 note by Chenu himself.[7]

Alberigo and his associates present Chenu as the victim of obscurantism and the pawn of Roman politics. It is not that Chenu was falsely charged, Alberigo writes. The Roman censors were quite right in seeing Chenu's proposal as novel and radical: "In fact, the essay was the carrier of a completely fresh innovative burden and this they sensed without being able to express themselves otherwise than in negative and distorting terms."[8] For Alberigo, Chenu's little book is of "extraordinary density," and its central theses anticipate in a prophetic way the conciliar mood. The little work has a timeliness that explains its reissue now. What is called for is a "profound renewal of the scientific knowledge of Christianity."[9]

Chenu himself said of his little book that if it did not have many echos

5. Cf. Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Diario del Vaticano II. Note quotidiane al Concilio 1962–1963*.

6. M.-D. Chenu, *Le Saulchoir. Una scuola di teologia*. (Marietti, 1982).

7. Alberigo, Chenu, Fouilloux, Jossua, and Ladrière, *Une ècole de thèologie*.

8. "En effet, l'essai était porteur d'une charge innovatrice toute fraîche don't ils eurent l'intuition, sans pouvoir se l'exprimer autrement qu'en terms déformants et négatifs" (Ibid., 11).

9. Ibid., 12.

at the time of its appearance, "over time it has shown itself to have a permanent value and a fecundity that transcends the postmodernist polemics on the 'nouvelle théologie' of the 1940s and 1950s."[10] What elicits Alberigo's particular praise is Chenu's view that "the whole positive life of the Church, its activitites and thought, its devotions, sacraments, spiritualities, institutions and philosophies" constitute "lieux théologiques" for understanding Christianity.

Well, it is certain that the revival of interest in Chenu and the regard for him as one whose thought defined Vatican II entails the assumption that those who questioned what he had said, condemned his book, and silenced him are just in the nature of the case wrong. One could indeed come to an understanding of the postconciliar Church by reflecting on the assumptions of this revival. Chenu's role in the rejection of the schemata that had been approved by the pope and preconciliar commissions prior to the first session of Vatican II is recorded in his contemporaneous diary. Alberigo's notes suggest that he sees Chenu as an instrument for overthrowing the condemnation of modernism by Pope St. Pius X. In short, the resurrected Chenu's role is to counter the preconciliar theology, of which he was the victim and of which Vatican II is taken to be the repudiation.

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Into the intricacies of this ecclesiastical and theological dispute we have no intention of going. Nor is it necessary to do so in order to see the role that Chenu played in altering the conception of philosophy in such a way that it no longer supported the *praeambula fidei* as traditionally understood, as understood by St. Thomas Aquinas.

Chenu on Philosophy

Chenu's discussion of philosophy, like his discussion of theology, is carried on primarily in terms of the training of Dominicans: remarks about the nature of philosophy and the pedagogy of its acquisition are mixed in a way that sometimes affects the clarity of what Chenu wishes to say. For any Dominican, teacher or student, philosophy is part of a religious life and things will be said about it in terms of that context. For such reasons, perhaps, it is

10. Ibid., 12.

difficult to grasp just what Chenu wishes to say. There is a significant number of fairly dogmatic pronouncements.

Item. There can be no philosophical tradition, because a tradition requires faith.

Item. Philosophy achieved its autonomy within Christianity.

It is not easy to see what Chenu means by the "autonomy" of philosophy. He begins by noting the danger of seeing philosophy as the *ancilla theologiae*, as it is. "Before being *at the service* of theological science, reason has its own object and principles, and if its quest for the highest causes take it, by the paths of analogical knowledge, to the mystery of the transcendentals, it has no less its proper light with which to constitute an order of knowledge with its own tools and methods, with degrees, at the summit of which philosophy presides."[11]

"Philosophy" seems to function as a kind of blanket term until the final phrase, when it is reserved for the ultimate reach of reason. In any case, the problem is to establish philosophy's autonomy vis-à-vis theology. Not only does the chapter on philosophy follow on the chapter on theology, Chenu assumes his readers will face the problem of recognizing the autonomy of the philosophical enterprise. Having spoken of the autonomy of philosophy, Chenu goes on to speak of the separation of philosophy and faith that is the legacy of the Enlightenment and suggests that this had had a deleterious effect on the way in which Catholics think of philosophy. "An unreal separation, whence one ends by no longer conceiving the validity of rational work *in the interior* of Christian thought; one succumbs to the suspicion which marks rationalism, and that no doubt because by it one has first blunted the range of the requirements of method, of their scientific autonomy at the interior of faith."[12] As an example of the autonomy of philosophy, Chenu gives the *Summa contra gentes*.

11. "Avant d'être *au service* de la science théologique, la raison a son objet et ses principes, et si sa recherche des causes suprêmes l'entraîne, par les voies de la connaissance analogique, jusqu'au mystère des transcendentaux, elle n'en a pas moins sa lumière propre, de quoi constituer un ordre du savoir, avec son équipement et ses méthodes, avec des degrés, au sommet desquels préside la philosophie" (*Une école de théologie*, 152).

12. "Iréelle séparation, òu l'on finit par ne plus concevoir la validité du travail rationnel *à l'intérieur* de la pensée chrétienne; l'on cède à la suspicion dont la frappe le rationalisme, et cela sans doute parce qu'on a d'abord laissé pour son compte s'émousser la portée et les exigences des méthode, de leurs autonomies scientifiques à l'intérieur de la foi" (Ibid., 153).

Chenu then turns to the danger of presenting philosophy in such a way that spontaneity and creativity, wonder, are lost in a conceptual world where philosophy comes to be thought of as a set of preexistent problems with set solutions. This makes him skeptical about the notion of a *philosophia perennis*. And then he joins our problem: "When theologians themselves rightly make use of it, this is to vindicate the necessity of the rational bases of the faith *(praeambula fidei);* but this perennial character, quite real though it be, even rationally, cannot organically characterize philosophy, either in its attitude or in its content, for it effects a series of propositions, premises, or conclusions, which function as the least common denominator of philosophical thoughts and initiatives, very disparate in intuition and in systematization."[13]

This is a curious statement. On the one hand, it seems to be a reminder that the theologian is the one who designates a set of truths about God, his nature, and his attributes, as an acquisition of philosophy with a theological label, preambles of faith. This more or less extrinsic denomination of those philosophical truths—relating them to the truths God has revealed about himself—is taken to run the risk of skewing one's understanding of philosophy as such. Chenu then gives a list of philosophers—Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, Leibniz, and Wolff—suggesting, however, that this is to speak of shapeless and depersonalized enunciations. We cannot, he suggests, adequately define the statute of philosophy in Christianity by this phrase—he has in mind "perennial philosophy," not the preambles of faith—without compromising the philosophical attitude, its systematic power, and original research. Philosophical truth is not simply variations that develop around a common kernel, clear and acquired, always comfortably disponible. We can too easily lose the sense of the mysterious depth of the truth and its fragile malleability. It becomes a dead branch.

It is not easy to see just what it is Chenu wants to say here. He launches into what becomes a familiar charge against Scholastic thought but the notes of what he criticizes is the universality and notional, with the resultant loss of

13. "Lorsque les théologiens, l'utilisent, à bon droit chez eux, c'est pour revendiquer la nécessité et les permanence des assises rationelles de la foi *(praeambula fidei);* mais cette pérennité, toute réelle qu'elle soit, même rationellement, ne peut qualifier organiquement une philosophie, ni dans son attitude ni dans son contenu; car elle effect une série de propositions, prémisses ou conclusions, qui sont comme le plus petit commun dénominateur de pensées et d'initiatives philosophiques très disparates, en intuition et en sytèmatisation" (Ibid., 154).

the sense of contingency and of the individual. The principles of identity, sufficient reason, and contradiction come to occupy center stage. As opposed to what? Problems of existence, action, the individual, becoming, time; one becomes enclosed in a philosophy of essences, of ideal and immobile relations, apt for definition and determination. "Abstraction will then be the proper measure of intelligibility, and metaphysics will be only a 'science' more abstract than the others, as if being was only an essence. Philosophy takes on an exclusively deductive character and finds its perfection in a 'system,' a regime of definitions and conclusion where the irrational is suspect or neglected as unintelligible."[14]

This omnium gatherum is meant as a description of what Chenu calls "rationalism." The categories of Wolff are said to have taken over even the better Thomistic manuals. Metaphysics loses its spiritual and contemplative power, and "theodicy" is a system of physical proofs with little more spirituality than deism. In our schools "Scholastic exercises" are a parody of medieval disputes. What has been lost is the "personalism" of Augustine's *De magistro* which is carried over into Question 11 of Thomas's *Disputed Question on Truth*. In short, Scholasticism has become baroque, that which the Kantian critique is said to have demolished, "the philosophy of the clerical functionaries of Joseph II."[15] Zigliari is said to be contaminated with Wolfianism and we are susceptible to the seduction of Rousselot's *L'intellectualisme de saint Thomas*.

What Chenu means by "rationalism" is made clear in his comparison of Thomism and modern philosophy. The most serious rupture between the two is spiritual first of all. From the side of Thomism, individuals if not the school, contact was kept with the "humanism" of the *moderni* of the late Middle Ages with its roots in nominalism and this led Scholasticism into decadence. Thus it was a weakened philosophy that confronted the new turn that was modern philosophy. Chenu invokes both Maritain and Gilson in this swift sketch of the effects on Catholic thought of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

If it is common to lament the falling away of late Scholasticism from the self-confidence that had characterized early Christian thinkers, it is important to ask what the understanding of a healthy or nondecadent Thomism would be. While he is speaking primarily of the training of young Domini-

14. Ibid., 155–56.

15. Ibid., 156.

cans who will go on from philosophy to theology, Chenu seems sympathetic only to a pedagogy that would emphasize creativity. What he had to say about essence and the deleterious consequences of concentrating on it to the detriment of existence, an obscure enough charge, is one that became a commonplace. And what is Thomism in this view?

The history of philosophy instructs us on the notion of a system; this, together with insistence on the true philosophical attitude and opposition to so-called baroque Scholasticism, provides the tripod on which Chenu bases his summary remarks. A philosophical system can have spiritual value only when it is seen as emerging from the organic principles that command it. In short, he calls for a return to the principles from which the system is derived. "Certainly its intelligibility is manifest on its surface in the logical coherence of its propositions, but the source is deeper, if it is true that the clear and distinct idea is neither the criterion of truth nor the term of metaphysical knowledge."[16] It is of course true that Cartesian criteria are not the way to appraise Thomistic metaphysics, but what are the appropriate criteria? Would it really be possible, on one opposition offered us, to *explain* everything and *see* nothing? Of course one might repeat the words of an explanation without understanding it, but how does one distinguish the explaining properly done from the seeing? But our attention is now turned to Thomas Aquinas as a model of what it is that Chenu is rather obscurely promoting.

> The philosophy of St. Thomas is an eminent case of the emergence of spirit embodied in conceptual armor most rigorous in its determinations. This is rightly said—and it is only necessary to see it in terms of classical rationalism in order not to recognize it—the philosophy of St. Thomas is not what is called a "system." [17]

We do not adhere to Thomism as to a system and our fidelity to it requires observation of the elementary laws of philosophical work. They are permanent curiosity, spontaneity, conquest. "It is not defined by adherence to propositions and theses, but by the sharing of organic principles and primary per-

16. "Certes son intelligibilité réside, en pleine surface, dans la cohérence logique de ses propositions; mais la source en est plus profonde, s'il est vrai que l'idée claire et distincte n'est ni le critère de la verité ni le terme de la connaissance métaphysique" (Ibid., 164).

17. "La philosophie de saint Thomas est un cas éminent de cette emergence de l'ésprit là même où s'incarne dans l'armature conceptuelle la plus rigoreuses en ses déterminations. On l'a dit avec raison—et il faut ne la voir qu'à travers le rationalisme classique pour ne pas le reconnaître—, la philosophie de saint Thomas n'est pas ce qu'on appelle une 'système'" (Ibid., 165).

ceptions, its inspiration and methods of which perceptions and propositions are the consequences. Failing this, philosophy engenders a Scholasticism, not a philosophy. It is the very fervor of our docility that assures our spiritual liberty against scholarly solidification and dialectical dogmatism."

It seems fair to say that this impressionistic chapter on philosophy tells us far more about what Chenu opposes than about what he proposes. Perhaps his intended audience was presumed to supply the deficiency. But taking the chapter as such, one is struck by the fervor with which Chenu writes of the defects of Thomism. As he points out, "system" is a term learned from the history of philosophy and it is not clear what denying it of Thomism is meant to express. Chenu seems tempted by a desire to define Thomism as an amorphous spirit that exhibits an unspecified creativity and freedom, but then corrects that by noting that sharing and adopting the principles leads to propositions and theses. Chenu used the phrase "Christian philosophy" early on in his little book, and one wishes that it had become thematic in this chapter, since much of what he has to say has less to do with the essence of philosophy than with its practice, the moral and spiritual engagement in the enterprise. Given the aim of this book and its very limited distribution once published, it would seem to be a criticism of absent enemies.

The Silence of Father Chenu

No one reading *Une école de théologie*, a history and program for a pontifical institution by its president, will be surprised that those responsible for such institutions would want to ask Chenu just what he was saying in this little book. Was he making a plea for a far more radical rethinking of theology and philosophy than he made explicit? This is what his champions and friends think, if only in retrospect. Thus Alberigo writes somewhat condescendingly that the Roman authorities were right to scent novelty. "One can now acknowledge that the censors were right, at least on one point. The essay was in fact the bearer of an innovating charge, quite fresh, of which they had an intuition, without being able to express it otherwise than in deforming and negative terms."[18] But then there must have been a failure at clear expression on Chenu's side as well.

18. Ibid., 11.

The personal effect of his little book on Chenu was hard. The book was put on the Index—surely a Pickwickian precaution for a book *hors de commerce*—and he was removed as rector of the Saulchoir. His sympathy with Catholic Action in the form of the Jocistes, his involvement with the worker priest movement, and his increasingly open embrace of socialism gave him the look of a radical indeed. And, as his diary for 1962 to 1963 makes clear, he was one of the theologians who engineered a revolt against the schemata that had been prepared for the council fathers. They had been circulated among the bishops in advance of the opening of the council and had the approval of the pope, but after furious politicking they were thrown out and the council fathers had to begin again from scratch. Chenu's complaints against the schemata are very much like his complaint against baroque Scholasticism. But his opposition was methodological. Chenu emerged as a champion of the theology based on the signs of the times, by which he meant that Church teaching must emerge from the experience of the faithful and the events in the world in which they live.

Guelluy's article has placed the ideas in Chenu's book among the targets of the encyclical *Humani Generis* in which Pope Pius XII came to the defense of Thomism against the "new theology." Already in 1946, he had spoken along these lines to the Jesuits, with an eye perhaps on Teilhard de Chardin. And the Dominicans. *Humani Generis* appeared in 1950. Historians like Alberigo and Guelluy assume that such actions of the Magisterium were mistaken and that it was unjust to question de Chardin on evolution and Rahner, Chenu, and de Lubac about their views. Such men are to be seen as heroic victims whose enlightened outlook eventually triumphed, sweeping the table at Vatican II.

It would not be fair to assess these men on the basis of intemperate defenses of them. It is a notable fact that many of these thinkers ended up as theological advisors to bishops at Vatican II and some of those who had been under a preconciliar cloud were eventually named cardinals, such as de Lubac and Congar. Cardinal de Lubac himself felt marginalized by postconciliar events and inveighed against the young as once others had inveighed against him.

Cry Wolff

Perhaps nothing illustrates the scatter-gun kind of criticism that was directed against Thomists of the twentieth century who were followers of Cajetan than the claim that they had been decisively influenced by Christian Wolff. Appeal to Wolff as a source of what allegedly had gone wrong in Scholastic philosophy occurs already in Chenu's *Une école de théologie*.[19] The first mention is oblique enough, but later Wolff comes up when Chenu is discussing how we can rid ourselves of "baroque Scholasticism." "To disinfect ourselves of this 'baroque' Scholasticism—which the Kantian critique ruined but which survives where the Critique has not taken—it is necessary not only to refute theses, against Suarez and Wolff; there is also a need to recover a kind of speculative generosity. . . ."[20] Linked with Leibnitz or Suarez here, Wolff was destined to play more than a cameo role in the wholesale criticism of the Thomistic school by those who would save Thomas from it.[21]

Florent Gaboriau sees Gilson's reaction to the silencing of Chenu as a watershed in the historian's career. He was determined not to abandon his friend but to support him as best he could. So it was, claims Gaboriau, that "the sorry joke" of Wolff began. Eventually, the great accusation against Garrigou-Lagrange, the presumed villain of the piece, was that the Dominican professor at the Angelicum had been inspired by Christian Wolff.[22]

19. Florent Gaboriau thinks, *sauf erreur*, that Chenu was the first to claim that the categories of Wolff reign in even the best Thomistic manuals. See *Thomas d'Aquin, penseur dans l'Eglise* (Paris, 1992), 86, n. 48.

20. "Pour nous désinfecter de cette scolastique 'baroque'—qu'a ruinée la critique kantienne, mais qui survit là où n'est pas passée la critique—ce ne sont pas seulement des thèses qu'il faut rèfuter, contre Suarez ou Wolff; c'est aussi une espèce de générosité spéculative qu'il s'agit de retrouver . . ." (Ibid., 156).

21. It is noteworthy that Père Lagrange, who for Chenu is the very model of the scholarship that should characterize the Saulchoir, held Cajetan in the highest esteem. See M. J. Lagrange, O.P., *Au service de la Bible* (Paris, 1967), 283: "For me, Cajetan was the king of distinction." Also see Gaboriau, *Thomas d'Aquin, penseur dan l'Eglise*, 186–87. Having read Cajetan attentively, Lagrange felt that the great commentator's erudition extended far beyond that of Thomas himself "when studied with this so intelligent interpreter."

22. Gilson would say of the thought of Garrigou-Lagrange that "it is the very negation of that of St. Thomas" (*L'être et l'essence* [Paris, 1948], 176). Chenu, in a preface to R. Laverdière's *Le principe de causalité. Recherches thomistes récentes* (Paris, 1969), 7–9, had discerned "in the continuity of the fabric of the school an injection of thought emanating from a heterogeneous inspiration, that of the philosophy of Wolff." Gilson blamed Garrigou-Lagrange for Chenu's troubles with the Roman authorities.

And who was Christian Wolff? A German born in 1679, Wolff became known as an advocate of secular rationalism, something that brought on him severe criticism. Wolff was a Lutheran who had acquired knowledge of Aquinas and Suarez. His early works were written in German. He came to the attention of Leibniz and the two men corresponded until 1716, the year of Leibniz's death. Wolff himself died in 1754, leaving behind a vast corpus in German and Latin. Metaphysics, in his view, comprised general ontology and the special disciplines of cosmology, psychology, and theology. Wolff was doubtless an interesting figure, but the question remains: Did he have any influence on the development of the Thomistic school? It certainly came as a surprise to Garrigou-Lagrange to find that Gilson claimed that he, Garrigou, owed his metaphysics to Wolff. Garrigou-Lagrange had never read a page of Wolff. De Lubac, having learned of this,[23] wrote that Wolfe "had left his mark nonetheless on some of the most intransigeant Thomists, the most official ones—even if they had never read him."[24] It became part of the campaign against Cajetan and his followers to cry Wolff. Thus, lamenting the deviation of "all the great masters of Scholasticism," due to the tradition that nourished them, in comparing the human species to other terrestrial species, De Lubac writes:

> Those who read St. Thomas as they run have often taken the objection for the response (they were numerous, until recently), doing this in the name of the "pure Aristotelianism" that St. Thomas should have held. Their misreading is explained at bottom by a double error: on the one hand, what they take for "pure Aristotelianism" is indeed rather a "Wolffian rationalism," and, on the other hand, what interests us directly here . . .[25]

The alleged influence of Wolff never becomes anything other than an aside whose repetition over the years conferred on it the status of established truth. But on what basis could one receive it? No basis was ever given.[26] De Lubac

23. From the article of M.-B. Lavaud, O.P., "Le P. Garrigou-Lagrange," in *Revue Thomiste* 64 (1964):184, n.

24. H. de Lubac, *Lettres de M. Gilson* (Paris, 1986), 183.

25. "Ceux qui, lisant saint Thomas trop vite, ont mis ici l'objection à la place de la réponse (ils sont nombreux, à une date recente), l'ont fait au nom de l' 'aristotelisme pur' qu'aurait professé saint Thomas. Mais leur faute de lecture s'explique par une double erreur de fond: d'une part, ce qu'ils prenaient pour 'aristotelisme pur' est bien plutôt un 'rationalisme wolffien,' et d'autre part—ce qui nous intéresse directement ici . . ." (*Le mystère*, 199).

26. "La désignation de cet ancêtre n'saccompagne cependant d'aucune enquête sérieuse sur

cites a letter of Maurice Blondel that dates from 1904 in which he had written of "the flat dogmatism of Wolff and Enlightenment philosophy" which had made Kant disgusted with metaphysics. The suggestion, contextually, seems to be that behind this putatively grounded Kantian distaste is the influence of Cajetan.

One cannot study the history of these attacks on Cajetan and the Thomistic school without encountering personal motives behind it that are not always savory or rational or edifying. How is it possible for a historian of the stature of Gilson to write an article like "Cajetan et l'existence?" How is it possible for so astute a thinker as Henri de Lubac to find in Cajetan a doctrine he does not hold and on the basis of this misunderstanding to suggest that the saintly commentator is somehow responsible for atheistic humanism? The incommensurability between the critique—even if it were founded—and the conclusions drawn are breathtaking. And what prompted Marie-Dominique Chenu to spend most of his essay on Dominican education at the Saulchoir trashing the tradition in which he stands? That personal grievance of an extraordinary kind is in the background is an unavoidable realization when we consider the running commentary de Lubac gives on the nineteen letters Gilson wrote him over the space of some two decades, from 1956 to 1975. The comments of de Lubac on these letters far exceed in quantity the letters themselves.

In *Le philosophe et la théologie*, Gilson recalls the intemperate attitude of Laberthonnière toward Thomas Aqunas. "Saint Thomas has done more harm to the Church than Luther; he said it, but one can repeat it because the text has been printed beside." Gilson comments, "There was no concern to do justice to the detested theologian. He was capable of anything."[27] Gaboriau draws the parallel. As Laberthonnièe to St. Thomas, so Gilson to Cajetan.[28]

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le contenu de la transmission génétique. Chenu déplore simplement 'que chez nous par exemple l'orthodoxie thomiste d'une Ziglira, d'ailleurs contaminée de wolfianisme, ait coupé court à l'inspiration, à la profondeur platonicienne d'un Lepidi'" (Gaboriau, *Thomas d'Aquin, penseur dans l'Eglise*, 86, n. 48).

27. *Le philosophe et la théologie*, 62.

28. "Retenons du moins que le grief fait à Cajetan par Gilson est d'ordre philosophique—et tout à fait inédit,—comme l'était tout à l'heure, le grief opposé à Thomas d'Aquin par Laberthonnière, sous le couvert également d'une motivation spirituelle" (*Thomas d'Aquin, penseur dans l'Eglise*, 77).

The silencing of Chenu and the placing of *Une école de théologie* on the Index of Prohibited Books seems to have been a turning point for Gilson. Seeing his friend as a victim of Roman Thomists, Gilson turned on them, and this meant the beginning of an animosity toward Garrigou-Lagrange that grew to Laberthonnière proportions. After succeeding to the chair of Henri Bergson in the French Academy, Gilson began to speak of the shabby way that philosopher had been treated by Thomists.[29] In a letter to Anton Pegis in 1947, Gilson wrote, "The situation of P. Chenu is still deteriorating, nobody knows why, except that three French Canadian bishops have raised objections to his teaching in Montreal, or, a fortiori, Quebec. . . . It is a great pity and my heart is bleeding for my friend."[30]

An episode at the Thomistic Congress in Rome is described with morose delectation by de Lubac. *Humani Generis* had appeared, and Father Charles Boyer, S.J., had pointed out passages in the encyclical with some relish which, he said, were aimed at Chenu. Informed by Garrigou-Lagrange that he would be saying something critical about *L'être et l'essence* in his paper to the congress, Gilson, according to de Lubac, told the Dominican that if he did this Gilson would be on the first train out of Rome. Did he perhaps fear that his book too would be put on the Index? An unlikely eventuality, but whatever happened, Gilson's animosity for Roman theologians increased by several notches, and in letters he spoke with increasing intemperateness about Garrigou-Lagrange and Boyer. Gilson obviously thought that the charge of Wolffianism against Garrigou-Lagrange was simply fair criticism.

The letters exchanged by Jacques Maritain and Gilson over the course of many years provide examples of Gilson's unsuccessful attempts to enlist Maritain in the crusade. Maritain had his own grievances against Garrigou, who had been appalled by Maritain's behavior during the Spanish Civil War, but he never forgot the role that Garrigou-Lagrange had played over many years in the Cercle d'études thomistes.[31] On speculative issues, Maritain and Gar-

29. A reference to Jacques Maritain? On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of *Bergsonian Philosophy*, his first book, Maritain expressed regret for the relentlessness of his criticisms, stressing the enormous spiritual impact of Bergson's lectures.

30. Lawrence Shook's biography of Gilson, 275; quoted by de Lubac in a note to Gilson's sixth letter, *Lettres de M. Etienne Gilson*, 58, n. 10.

31. In his correspondence with Charles Journet, misgivings about Garrigou-Lagrange were expressed by both men, but the tone is *toto coelo* different from Gilson's.

rigou-Lagrange were always on the same page. Furthermore, when Maritain became a Thomist he was conscious of entering a tradition that was largely defined by those commentators so intemperately and unjustly attacked by Gilson and de Lubac. There is an almost bullying note in Gilson's efforts to get Maritain to agree with him on Cajetan. When it came to Teilhard de Chardin, on the other hand, Gilson resisted de Lubac's efforts to win his sympathy for his fellow Jesuit and a negative attitude toward Teilhard was a continuing bond between Maritain and Gilson. Eventually, Maritain too became an object of criticism by Gilson; for example, in a letter written to Father Armand Maurer after Maritain's death, Gilson claims that Maritain never understood St. Thomas.[32]

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These are melancholy matters to relate. The scholarly achievements of Gilson and of Chenu and de Lubac are beyond any possible doubt. Each of them made contributions of extraordinary value in their many books. Of the three, perhaps only Chenu did not receive the full recognition he deserved, his political activities presenting an obstacle to the accolades and honors that came Gilson's and de Lubac's way. These two confirmed one another in their sweeping criticisms to the point that it became impossible to imagine that anything other than Roman machinations lay behind criticism of their work. As the years passed, Gilson's charge against other students of Thomas focused on their alleged failure to understand what Thomas meant by existence as the act of essence. But, as we shall see, Gilson's own understanding of Thomas on *esse* is highly questionable.

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It has been necessary to touch upon such events in order to provide a background for our question. What interpretations of Thomism have contibuted to the widespread skepticism about the *praeambula fidei*?

32. See *Etienne Gilson Jacques Maritain Correspondance 1923–1971*, ed. Géry Prouvost (Paris: J. Vrin, 1991), 275ff.

Six ~ THE ALLEGED FORGETFULNESS OF *ESSE*

Etienne Gilson's claim that Cajetan, among many others, failed to understand what Thomas had to say about *esse* obviously implies that Gilson himself understands Thomas correctly. Having shown that his reading of Cajetan fails to make his point against the great commentator, we turn now to what it is that Gilson thinks Cajetan missed. Our interest is the impact all this has on the traditional understanding of the *praeambula fidei*.

Medieval Studies

Gilson was one of the giants in the revival of medieval studies in the twentieth century.[1] When he began to teach, no courses were offered in the thought of such figures as Thomas Aquinas and it was one of Gilson's boasts that he had introduced the first such course into the French university system. That course would become the book *Le thomisme*, the successive editions of which represent Gilson's self-education as a Thomist. Early on, Gilson began to use the phrase "Christian philosophy" for what went on in the Middle Ages,[2] distinguishing philosophy as it was engaged in during that

1. Apart from his own numerous and influential writings, Gilson was the first president of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies at Toronto, dividing his academic year between Paris and Toronto; he was also, with Chenu, founder and editor of the enormously important series *Archives d'histoire doctinale et literaire de moyen âge*. In North America he virtually singlehandedly established medieval studies. The Medieval Institute at Notre Dame was a spin-off of Toronto, its first director being Gerald B. Phelan and its second, also a recommendation of Gilson's, Astrik Gabriel. These innovations were the harbinger of the explosion of medieval studies that has led to programs, institutes, or centers of medieval studies in nearly all the major American universities. Gilson's students were prominently represented in Canadian and American universities throughout the second half of the twentieth century.

2. While Leo XIII's 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris* did not initially bear the title Christian philosophy, the pope so referred to it subsequently, and Gilson refers to this as justification for his own usage.

long middle period from classical philosophy, on the one hand, and modern philosophy beginning with Descartes, on the other. But Gilson's argument that there was indeed a philosophy engaged in by the medievals ended ironically in a position hardly distinguishable from that of his early adversaries. We have already seen the contrast between Gilson and such historians as Emile Bréhier.[3] How did Gilson's view compare with that of others who, like himself, held that there was indeed such a thing as medieval philosophy?

Perhaps it will suffice to draw attention to Maurice de Wulff's history of medieval philosophy. It was de Wulff's view that there was a medieval philosophy distinct from theology, and the singular is not for him merely a grammatical note. He held that Scholasticism was a single philosophy to which all the great minds of the Middle Ages subscribed and he laid out what he took to be the fundamental tenets of that single philosophy. The work of Gilson as historian of medieval thought can be seen against the background of this de Wullfian assumption. Gilson was to argue (1) that philosophy was indeed a distinguishable feature of medieval intellectual life but (2) there were many varieties of it, perhaps as many as the major figures. That is, while Albert and Thomas and Bonaventure and Scotus and Ockham all had a philosophy, these differ widely from one another.

From a historical point of view, the question of medieval philosophy—Was there any such thing? Were there many varieties of it?—involves at least an implicit reference to Greek philosophy. The implicit question is: Did the men of the Middle Ages engage in the sort of activity that the Greeks called "philosophy"? Of course even this is too broadly stated. Determining what, if any, common meaning the term "philosophy" might have when applied to the doctrines that stretch from Thales to Plotinus is a good propaideutic to asking what the term means as applied to pagan and Christian thought. For all practical purposes, the latter question comes down to how we can compare a certain intellectual activity engaged in during the Middle Ages with the sort of activity that is conveyed by the treatises of Aristotle.

Bertrand Russell has suggested the following sweeping comparison. "Scholasticism, as a movement, differs from classical philosophy in that its

3. Copleston says that a great change in our knowledge of medieval philosophy begins about 1880 (circa *Aeterni Patris*), and mentions such pioneers as Baeumker, Ehrle, Grabmann, de Wulff, Pelster, Geyer, Mandonnet, and Pelzer.

conclusions are circumscribed before the event. It must function within the orbit of orthodoxy."[4] The suggestion is that classical philosophy operated in the absence of any encompassing constraints or expectations. Whatever the accuracy of this as a description of the philosophizing of Plato and Aristotle, it is certain that some such view of philosophy is assumed when philosophizing is held to be incompatible with holding religious beliefs. The latter, as Russell intimates, are taken to hem in thinking in an unnatural way. The natural way is for thinking to be carried on in an untrammeled fashion, presumably without presuppositions, without prior constraints having to do with plausibility, and so on.

It is not an easy matter to discover just what Russell himself means by this contrast in the context in which he draws it. Thus, speaking of Thomas Aquinas and theology, he writes, "As for theology, we must remember that this really falls into two parts. There is a first, what is called natural theology, which deals with God in the context of topics like first causes, prime movers and the like. This is what Aristotle calls theology; it may be set on the side of metaphysics. But Aquinas, as a Christian, also developed what may be called dogmatic theology. This treats matters accessible only through revelation. Here he falls back on earlier Christian writers, mainly Augustine, whose views on grace and salvation he seems on the whole to endorse. These are indeed matters that lie beyond reason. Dogmatic theology is of course quite alien to the spirit of ancient philosophy; nothing like it is found in Aristotle."[5] But of course the question is rather whether Thomas's natural theology is like that engaged in by Aristotle. If it is, then philosophy in the Aristotelian sense was engaged in by at least one Christian living in the thirteenth century. The fact that he also engaged in other intellectual and spiritual activities seems to leave that observation unaltered.

There is one touchstone, then, as to whether or not there is such a thing as medieval philosophy. Aristotle can be taken as paradigmatic and we then ask whether the sort of thing Aristotle did in his treatises was also done during the Middle Ages. This seems to be the way in which Fernand van Steenberghen proceeds when he gives an account of medieval philosophy.

In a paper delivered to the Fifth International Congress of Medieval Phi-

4. Bertrand Russell, *Wisdom of the West* (New York: Crescent Books, 1989), 153.
5. Ibid., 158.

losophy a quarter of a century ago, van Steenberghen sets forth his task in a series of questions. Do we find the term "philosophy" in medieval writings? In what sense or senses is it used? Does it resemble or differ from the philosophy of pagan antiquity? Does it resemble or differ from the way philosophy is conceived since Descartes?

Of course he finds the term *philosophia* used from patristic times through the Middle Ages. Augustine will appropriate it to the wisdom of the Gospel, taken to be the true philosophy or pursuit of wisdom. At the same time, Augustine is recognizing an earlier sense of the word and in Book 8 of *The City of God* he gives us a sketch of the history of philosophy in that sense. In Boethius, van Steenberghen finds more. There is the acceptance of philosophy as "a human wisdom, the fruit of experience and personal reflection. Unlike Augustine, he does not feel man's weakness when left to his own lights or the sterility of paganism in the domain of wisdom."[6] While later writers will return to the use of philosophy as a synonym for Christian wisdom, van Steenberghen sees a gradual clarification so that in the twelfth century Gundasalinus, William of Conches, and Hugh of St. Victor are writing of philosophy as an enterprise not intrinsically governed by religious belief.[7]

The thirteenth century represents the consolidation of this view along with the insertion into the university curriculum of philosophy in this sense. He refers to Robert Kilwardby's *De ortu et divisione philosophiae* as the most interesting medieval introduction to philosophy. "At the outset of the thirteenth century, philosophy in its entirety is introduced into university teaching in the faculty of arts. Saint Bonaventure, Saint Albert, and Saint Thomas

6. "La conception de la philosophie au moyen âge," *Actas del V Congreso International de Filosofia Medieval* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1979), 39.

7. "Les penseurs du XIIe siècle portent un vif intérèt à la philosophie, à son histoire et à sa structure, malgré l'absence de ce savoir dans le programme des études. Jean de Salisbury est l'auteur d'un des premiers essais d'histoire de la philosophie. L'auteur inconnu d'un *Tractatus quidam de philosophia et partibus eius* mentionne plusieurs divisions de la philosophie. Á Tolède, Dominique Gundisalvi publie un *De divisione philosophiae* qui est un remarquable traité sur la classification des sciences; la *philosophia* ou *humana scientia* y est dintinguée de la *divina scientia* et groupe toutes les sciences profanes. Guillaume de Conches a composé une *Philosophia mundi*, un dialogue intitulé *Dragmaticon philosophiae* et une *Summa moralium philosophorum*. Enfin, dans l'*Epitome in philosophiam* d'Hugues de Saint-Victor, les arts libéraux sont traités comme parties de la philosophie. Dans tous ces écrits, la philosophie est conçue comme l'ensemble des sciences profanes élaborées par l'ésprit humain et elle est dintinguée de plus en plus nettement de la science sacrée" ("La conception de la philosophie au moyen âge," 42).

contributed in an effective way to defining the nature, structure, methods, and limits of scientific knowledge. All of them saw philosophy as *a rational knowledge that is constructed with the aid of man's natural means of knowing*; it is contrasted with theology, which is *veritatis et credibilis notitia certa*."[8]

Van Steenberghen's paper was one of two papers presented under the general heading of the Conception of Philosophy in the Middle Ages. The other was given by Tullio Gregory, and it is in stark contrast with van Steenberghen's. Gregory feels that the Louvain historian of philosophy is guilty of an ahistorical and simplistic approach. He would have been better advised, Gregory suggests, to take the use of the term "philosophy" as he found it in different medieval thinkers. What van Steenberghen has done is to take as regulative a conception of philosophy as a system whose highest component is metaphysics and which is an apt instrument for theology. Augustine, according to Gregory, cannot be characterized as appropriating the term "philosophy" to a Christian, that is, supernatural wisdom. "To bring in a distinction between philosophy and theology in the works of theologians and to say, with van Steenberghen, that the Augustinian ideal of wisdom and of Christian philosophy obviously refer to 'a supernatural wisdom,' to a 'theological knowledge,' is to impose on them parameters absolutely foreign to their world which, as is known, does not even recognize the term 'theology' as having our sense, no more does it know the concept of the supernatural, born from a later concept of nature, profoundly different from that of Latin and Greek patristics."[9]

Tullio Gregory's central complaint is the way in which van Steenberghen's account separates thought from thinker, the abstract from the concrete historical setting in which it arose and which alone can provide us with a correct understanding of it.[10] The countersuggestion is that when we im-

8. Ibid., 45. The Latin phrase describing theology is taken from Bonaventure's *Conferences on the Gifts of the Holy Ghost*, IV, 5.

9. Tullio Gregory, "La conception de la philosophie au moyen âge," *Actas del V Congreso International de Filosofia Medieval* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1979), 52.

10. "... particulièrement significative à cet égard est la distinction qui revient assidûment chez van Steenberghen entre la philosophie et les personnes des philsoophes, comme s'il s'agissait de deux réalités distinctives: d'un côté les personnes, c'est à dire, les hommes historiquement conditionnés, de l'autre la philosophie qui se déroule dans une atmosphere raréfiée d'idées, l'atmosphère de la pure science, selon des lignes de développemnt qui lui sont propres: 'les principles, les méthodes et les conclusions de la philosophie,' écrit-il, 'échappent à toute in-

merse ourselves in the particularities of this thinker or that, their thought takes on a distinctiveness explainable in all kinds of ways other than by the principles and methods of pure philosophy.[11] In short, Gregory objects to the history of medieval philosophy viewed as isolating pure concepts in their scientific character rather than rendering justice to their "impure character" as joined with the real life of the men who developed them.

How summarize this conflict? There are two approaches to the philosophy of the Middle Ages. On the one hand, seeing the question as bearing on the possible continuity of ancient and medieval, pagan and Christian, thought, one begins with a regulative conception of philosophy, taken from Aristotle, and asks if and when this shows up in the medieval period and, when it does, what contributions are made to the Aristotelian system. Employed as a criterion, the Aristotelian conception of philosophy enables one to appraise, to rank, and to compare such contributions. On the other hand, one is urged simply to acquire the outlook of the medieval author(s) studied. If works of Aristotle figure in their efforts, see the way in which they contribute to the aim and task of the medieval author. Then, to take one of Gregory's examples, the Aristotelian Organon is seen as functioning in the development of a sacred science.

Clearly the contrast is not as stark as Tullio Gregory presents it. It could be argued that the distinction between secular and sacred is present from the very outset of medieval education, as, for a notable example, in the *Institutiones* of Cassiodorus Senator. Unsurprisingly, the inspiration for this is biblical. Given the structuring of the curriculum, the liberal arts, which for centuries were all but synonymous with secular learning, were studied both for their own sake—they have criteria and methods proper to them—and for the help they could render in understanding Scripture. Whether one thinks of this as a pure or an impure condition of secular learning depends on whether one is

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fluence directe de la doctrine chretienne comme de tout autre élement étranger à la nature du savoir philosophique'" ("La conception de la philosophie au moyen âge," 50).

11. E.g., the recovery and use of the Aristotelian organon does not serve the timeless history of scientific knowledge, but takes on a meaning within inquiries taking their rise from analyses of language with respect to problems posed by contrary *auctoritates* in view of a new way of using *ratio* in the construction of sacred science. Cf. Gregory, "La conception de la philosophie au moyen âge," 53.

thinking of the internal demands of an art or its use in acquiring the wisdom of revelation. Gregory asserts a principle of basic importance when he urges that authors be read first of all as themselves, in terms of what they sought to do and why and where and all the rest of it. Needless to say, this is not the task of a summer's day. And there are many medieval authors, each of whom is owed this courtesy. Van Steenberghen's interest may be said to arise in the course of doing that kind of reading. Comparisons such as the great Lourain historian of philosophy makes are bound to occur. Furthermore, unless the history of philosophy is taken to be an end in itself, one will ask philosophical questions and one of them will surely lead to ranking thinkers with reference to a notion of what philosophy is. That is what van Steenberghen does.

One can see in the contrast Tullio Gregory draws between his approach and that of van Steenberghen something of the attitude of Gilson toward Maritian in the letter to Father Maurer mentioned earlier. One might say that Gregory himself is dealing with abstract and "pure" accounts of the two approaches. In reality, as practiced, there will likely be a meld of the two. Gilson writes as if the only truth he was interested in was a true account of what Thomas Aquinas taught. But anyone who has read him, as historian as well as philosopher, knows this is a woefully inadequate account of his philosophical range and depth. Likewise, it would be libelous to suggest that Maritain did not hold himself to accurate historical understanding of Thomas Aquinas. And, as he did in *Moral Philosophy*, he writes history as well.

The point of this discussion is to put before the reader a quarrel, not over whether philosophy was engaged in during the Middle Ages, but over whether it was one kind of philosophy or several. Frederick Copleston alludes to these matters in the "Introduction" to the second volume of his *histoire fleuve* of philosophy. He points out that the distinction between philosophy and theology was an important theme of medieval thought and the distinction was expressed in several ways and different consequences were said to follow from it. Secondly, he speaks of Thomas Aquinas as having given philosophy its charter. Thirdly, the difference in conceptions of philosophy produce different accounts of theology.

Copleston's first point could be illustrated much as van Steenberghen did, tracing the discussion from Boethius through thirteenth- and fourteenth-century thinkers. But did the distinction make a difference? "To

a superficial observer it might appear that when St. Thomas asserted a clear distinction between dogmatic theology and philosophy, he was merely asserting a formalistic distinction, which had no influence on his thought and which he did not take seriously in practice."[12] Copleston counters this with the example of Thomas's treatment of the eternity of the world, something settled by revelation but an open question philosophically. The claim that the world has always been is falsified by Genesis, but it is not a philosophical error, as if one violated the canons of reason in maintaining it. Of course, Thomas would see a philosophical error in someone's saying that the world necessarily always was.

Copleston chose an effective example where the distinction makes a difference, where in Thomas's practice one can see in the discussion of a vexed point the clarification of the difference between a theological and a philosophical argument on the same issue. Could Copleston have multiplied examples? Did he merely pluck one from an infinite set to make his point? And isn't the distinction itself made in a theological context? Aristotle could not have been expected to wonder how his opinion sat with respect to the book of Genesis. Is Thomism ever a philosophy?

Our overall question presupposes a number of considerations if it is to be addressed satisfactorily, and what we have been discussing is one of the presuppositions to it. Let us now be very explicit about the subquestions that make up that preliminary inquiry.

1. Was a distinction between philosophy and theology recognized during the Middle Ages?

2. If recognized, did it express itself in two kinds of literature, the one philosophical, the other theological?

The answer to (1) is Yes, but Tullio Gregory prompts us to remember that the distinction was made in different ways and in differing historical and cultural contexts. That of course affects the answer to (2). Gregory might seem to require us to list Eriugena's *De divisione naturae* in the stream of philosophical literature or, reaching back to the patristic period, works in which true philosophy is equated with Christianity. Furthermore, he objects to philosophical appraisals of putative philosophical writing on the grounds

12. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 2 (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1950), 7.

that this is the application of an alien, abstract, and "pure concept" to a living, breathing, complex historical event. We concede only that comparison and appraisal might come too swiftly or with an insufficient appreciation of the historical circumstances, but inevitably they must come. Histories of philosophy will speak of rises and declines, of golden ages and ages of decadence, and these are philosophical judgments. A historian of medieval thought who takes the achievement of Thomas Aquinas as regulative will be making a philosophical argument about the history of medieval philosophy. So be it. In much the same way, histories of logic rank historical periods from the viewpoint of an understanding of modern logic. They will be found to ask whether there is any logic in the logical works of Aristotle. This can lead to anachronism, it can blind the historian to real achievement in the past of his discipline. To hold with Quine that logic is an old discipline and since 1879 it has been a great one[13] is not just a historical statement. The demand for "impure" history may be the most purist view of all.

Gilson and Thomistic Philosophy

In Chapter 3 of *Christian Philosophy*, Armand Maurer's 1993 PIMS translation of *Introduction à la philosophie chrétienne* (Paris, 1960), Gilson, noting that God gives his name as He Who Is, goes on to say some remarkably astute things about the limitations of so-called scientific biblical criticism. Then he turns to the text of *ST* I.1.

God is the author of Scripture. Thomas: "His exegesis is that of a theologian who has mastered all the resources of natural theology—the human science of divine things—and who strives to make natural reason speak the greatest possible amount of truth within the bosom, so to speak, of revealed truth." (27)

"Has mastered"—suggests that this is done prior to doing theology.

"Strives to make natural reason speak"—the second half of the sentence suggests that natural theology is done within theology.

13. Willard Van Orman Quine, *Methods of Logic* (New York: Henry Holt, 1950), vii: "Logic is an old subject, and since 1879 it has been a great one."

With appropriate distinctions both of these could be said to be true. On the one hand, classical philosophy is chronologically prior to Christianity and thus to theology. Thomas holds that knowledge of God was achieved by the philosophers; ergo, natural theology is chronologically prior to theology.

But that is a historical remark. Is it also true that biographically one who would be a theologian must first study philosophy? That fledgling theologians are presumed to know the theology of the philosophers seems implied by *ST* I.1.1.

Indeed ad 2 makes the point that the same truth can be considered in different sciences in the light of their different principles. Thus the truths about God that are studied in natural theology can also be considered in *sacra doctrina:*

> . . . nothing prevents the philosophical disciplines from treating certain things that are knowable by the light of natural reason and another science treating these same things as they are known in the light of divine revelation.[14]

So in the body of the article when Thomas says that it is necessary that the truths that can be known about God should be revealed (this is a hypothetical necessity, of course), this would seem to be the presupposition of the answer to the second objection. He is obviously not saying that what can be known cannot be known and therefore must be revealed, but rather given the importance of knowledge of God and the difficulty of attaining it philosophically, and then with the admixture of error and so on, and at the end of a long life, it is necessary if God's purposes are to be achieved that these naturally knowable truths be revealed. But as revealed they are seen in a different light than as philosophically proved.

About this, Gilson writes:

> Accordingly we should not think of the theology of the preambles of faith as though it were a sort of philosophical introduction, or a preface written in the style of metaphysics, awaiting the true beginning of theological speculation. Theology begins with the first *sed contra* of the *Summa*, and all the philosophical speculation the latter contains is integrated into theology in whose service the theologian employs it. It cannot

14. ". . . nihil prohibet de eisdem rebus, de quibus philosophicae disciplinae tractant secundum quod sunt cognoscibilia lumine naturalis rationis, et aliam scientiam tractare secundum quod cognoscuntur lumine divinae revelationis."

be of service unless it is truly philosophy; but the servant belongs to the family; she is part of the household.[15]

The phrase "the *theology* of the preambles of faith" is important to understanding this. To speak of naturally knowable truths about God as preambles of faith is done, of course, from the standpoint of faith. And their discussion by Thomas in the *Summa* is theological because he is comparing what natural reason knows with what has been revealed, which requires a standpoint higher than natural reason. It would seem to be almost tautological to say that what is done in theology is theological. The passage implies no denial of nor denigration of natural theology.

Gilson goes on to speak of the articles that make up Question 3 on the simplicity of God where all modes of created complexity are denied of God.

> Nothing is easier than to follow step by step the progress of this demonstration, which is completely rational and only employs notions familiar to traditional Aristotelianism, act and potency, form and matter, supposit and nature, finally essence and being—nothing of all this comes from revelation.[16]

In what sense, then, is this question theological? Gilson answers: It all takes place under the aegis of *Ego sum qui sum*. Thomas is explaining this self-description of God that has been revealed, so that the arguments are prompted by and guided by this revealed truth. This makes the whole question theological.

The final step in Question 3 is to say that in God essence and *esse* are one. Gilson puts it this way: "the theologian who here transcends the order of essence in order to reach that of the act of being is the same as the philosopher of the *De ente et essentia*."[17] This early text of Thomas is thus seen to be philosophical and not theological, but doesn't it too arrive at the identity of essence and *esse* in God? Doubtless it is because the argument is not prompted by *Ego sum qui sum* that makes it philosophical.

"Transcending the order of essence" is open to the criticisms Lawrence Dewan has made in his article "Etienne Gilson and the *Actus Essendi*." Thomas is not transcending essence but saying that in God essence and *esse* are one. Gilson goes on to say that the philosopher knows "that in a being [*ens*] the

15. Gilson, *Christian Philosophy*, 27–28.
16. Ibid., 28.
17. Ibid., 29.

essence does not contain anything to account for its being [*esse*]. On the contrary, actual being [*esse*] is the actuality of every form or nature. . . ."[18]

But the essence is what formally makes the *esse* to be the *esse* it is. The essence is not the efficient cause of the *esse* of the individual whose essence it is, but it is the explanation that it exists in this way and no other.

". . . we find something arbitrary in the theologian's decision to bring it to its ultimate conclusion, not in the essence of a being, but in the very act of existing."

But the conclusion is that in God his essence is his *esse*. . . .

And why are we thought to think this arbitrary?

This is because the reader of the *Summa*, who of course is paying attention to the dialectic of being he is invited to follow, "is once again tempted to think that St. Thomas mounts from philosophy to theology, whereas in fact he does the opposite."[19]

In theology, God is the subject and everything that is considered by the theologian is either God himself or something else considered with reference to God. Of course "mounting from philosophy to theology" is impossible in the sense that one might arrive at the truths theology considers from purely natural considerations—where it is a question of the *mysteria* not the *praeambula fidei*. On the other hand, the point of Question 1, Article 1 is that theology goes beyond philosophy, so in that sense one mounts from philosophy to theology.

Given the fact that, for Gilson, *esse* is the key to Thomas's thought, and given the fact that the identify of essence and *esse* in God is arrived at from their nonidentity in everything else, it is surprising to encounter Gilson's agnosticism with respect to our ability to establish that nonidentity.

No doubt there are reasons for thinking that there is in beings a composition of essence and being, but no one of them strictly demonstrates it. It is evident, or demonstrable, that a finite being does not have its being from itself. A finite essence, therefore, is in potency to its actual being, and this composition of potency and act suffices to distinguish radically the being which is only a *being*, from him who is Being. But how is it possible to demonstrate, by actually examining a being, that its actual existence is the effect of a finite act within its substance making it being *(ens),* in the precise sense of an essence having its own act of existing? Duns Scotus, Suarez, and countless other theologians have refused, and still refuse, to accept this metaphysical doctrine.[20]

18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 30.
20. Ibid.

There are "reasons for thinking" that essence and *esse* are not identical in things, but none is a demonstration. This could mean a number of things. On the basis of the *De hebdomadibus*, where *diversum est esse et id quod est* is listed among the axioms from which the argument will proceed, the distinction is taken to be self-evident, and then of course it could not be demonstrated in the strict sense. The kind of discourse whereby the meaning of self-evident truths is displayed and the kind of *reductiones ad absurdum* of their denial is not demonstrative. But Gilson seems to mean more than this.

Our inability to demonstrate this truth is said to be based on our inability to show that the actual existence of an *ens* is the effect of a finite act within its substance that makes it being *(ens)*. Surely he does not mean to say that the existence of the thing is caused by its existence? *Esse* is not an efficient cause, but that which is the most formal act, the act of all other forms. It does not help that Gilson seems to take the rejection of the real distinction by Scotus and Suarez as entailing that it is a nondemonstrable truth—in the sense of *demonstrable* he has in mind. But of course that is not the reason for what he is saying.

> But how is it possible to demonstrate, by actually examining a being, that its actual existence is the effect of a finite act within its substance making it being *(ens),* in the precise sense of an essence having its own act of existing?

That is the core of the passage, and it is very difficult to grasp just what it means. The reference to Scotus and Suarez may be taken to mean that there are those who hold that in an existent thing there is no composition of essence and existence. And Gilson is saying that there is no demonstration of the truth they deny.

Nonetheless, he goes on to draw the consequences of the denial. If there is no composition of essence and *esse* in finite things, there is no need to deny this composition of God in order to show his simplicity. So the theologian begins with God as simple—He is Is—and holds that the finite is necessarily complex. If one begins with the absolutely simple, who is being, then the complex is had by adding to "the basic act of being." And that must be an essence "through which an act of being is that of a particular being."[21] If this is not a real composition, then the finite would be God—just as simple as he is.

21. Ibid., 31.

So this is Gilson's reply to Scotus and Suarez, not, as one might have thought, an effort to track their reason for denying the real composition. The point is a procedural one. What cannot be established by direct examination of the complex is derived from a truth about God.

> The certainty that *esse*, or the act of being, is properly speaking an element of a being, and therefore included in its structure, is explained first of all by the prior certainty that the act of being actually exists in and by itself, in the absolute purity of what *has* nothing, not even essence, because it *is* everything that we could wish to attribute to it. Whereas He Who Is excludes all addition, a finite substance is necessarily composed of an act of being and of that which limits it. It is because it is known that God is pure being that the metaphysical core of reality is located in a metaphysical nonpure act of being.[22]

Nothing could be clearer. For Gilson, the key to Thomas's metaphysics lies in the primacy he ascribes to the act of being, the *actus essendi*, *esse*. There are nondemonstrable reasons for holding that the essence of a finite thing is other than its *esse*, but these are insufficient to overcome the doubts of Scotus and Suarez. Certainty is only gained by reversing the direction of the discourse—not from creature to God, but from God to creature. It is the divine simplicity conveyed by *Ego sum qui sum* that provides the argumentative basis for demonstrating the necessary composition of essence and *esse* in creatures. That is, only a theological argument is efficacious in establishing the key element in Thomas's metaphysics. But the *praeambula fidei* represent the ultimate achievement of metaphysics. Accordingly, Gilson has made the *praeambula fidei* dependent on theology, and theology is based on faith. This saps the *praeambula* of the force they have traditionally been taken to have. They no longer provide a *lingua franca* in which believer and nonbeliever can agree that there is a God and on some of his attributes.

As if sensing this clear implication of what he is saying, Gilson goes on to reject it. Although this whole dialectic "is set in motion, directed, and concluded in the light of the word of Exodus," it is metaphysical "in its method and structure, for nothing in the sacred text either suggests it or proclaims it."[23] But if sacred Scripture does not depend upon it, it depends upon sacred Scripture. "Since God has revealed himself as He Who Is, the philosopher

22. Ibid.
23. Ibid. Same reference for the other quotations in this paragraph.

knows that at the origin and very heart of beings it is necessary to place the pure act of existing." This is followed by a verbal taking back of what is being said. "We do not say: Since Scripture says so, the philosophical notions of being and God are in the last analysis identical with the act of being. In fact, Scripture itself does not say this, but it does say that the proper name of God is He Who Is." But this is to distinguish between the text and its exegesis, not between theology and philosophy.

> Because it [Scripture] says this I believe it. While I thus cling to the object of faith, the intellect, made fruitful by this contact, makes deeper progress in the understanding of the primary notion of being. With one and the same movement it discovers an unforeseen depth in the philosophical meaning of the first principle and gains a kind of imperfect but true knowledge of the object of faith.[24]

This may sound like an instance of Christian philosophy. But it is one thing to say that something believed is the occasion for grasping a philosophical truth that can be justified on philosophical grounds and therefore be commonly held by believer and nonbeliever, and quite another to say what Gilson is saying here. Here faith is more than an occasion. The "metaphyscial analysis" he has given is intrinsically dependent on an item of faith. Scripture does not describe God as *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* but that is a defensible account of He Who Is. It is what happens at this point that makes Gilson's account difficult to accept. The divine simplicity is the basis for attaining certainty about the composition of essence and *esse* in creatures.

True, Gilson had first indicated Thomas's actual procedure in Question 3 on the divine simplicity. That procedure involves first identifying a case of created complexity and then arguing that it cannot be found in God. The complex of essence and *esse* in creatures is the base from which Thomas argues that in God there must be identity of essence and *esse*.

At that point, Gilson mentions that Scotus and Suarez have questioned whether there is a composition of essence and *esse* in creatures, and Gilson agrees that none of the reasons for thinking so is demonstrative. But if the nonidentity of essence and *esse* is the very key to Thomas's thought, it must be held with certainty. It is here that Gilson suggests a reversal of the procedure of Thomas Aquinas. Rather than proceed from creature to God, Gilson

24. Ibid., 31–32.

holds that we must rather begin with God as pure existence, a datum of revelation, and then go on to argue that it is the very mark of the creature that in it essence and *esse* are not identical—lest it be equal to God.

Clearly it is one thing to say that a text in Exodus prompted a philosophical analysis of created being and its difference from the simple subsistent existence God is. The characteristic of such an analysis is that it does not intrinsically depend on a datum of revelation and thus can be held, if true, by believer and nonbeliever alike. Gilson makes the datum of revelation intrinsic to the analysis and ends by suggesting that we thereby gain "a kind of imperfect but true knowledge of the object of faith."[25] Clearly what Gilson is describing is from first to last theology, that is, discourse whose principles are revealed truths accepted by faith. And yet Gilson explicitly describes what he has said as an instance of Christian philosophy. It is called Christian "for the modest, though invaluable understanding of the word of God that it brings with it."[26] Is this the *per se* or *per accidens* aim of Christian philosophy? It appears to be formal and *per se*. The analysis can be called Scholastic because of the "doctrinal order, the broadening of perspective, and the deepening of philosophical views that the movement brings about." So there is a philosophical benefit as well as an exegetical one. "Under both these complementary aspects it is inseparable from Scripture." But discourse that is inseparable from Scripture is not philosophical.

Gilson's complaint against the Thomistic school, the Dominican Order, and especially Cardinal Cajetan is that they simply failed to realize the role that *esse* plays in Thomas's view of reality. It is a mark of his own presentation of what he takes to be Thomas's teaching that the point of reference is the subsistent existence God is. Although he reminds himself again and again that the connatural object of the human mind is the quiddity of sensible reality, he proceeds as if the ultimate measure—not ontologically, but in the order of understanding—were *ipsum esse subsistens*. Indeed, he often likens what he is doing to Neoplatonism, to Plotinus, suggesting that the path of metaphysics is from the top down. At the same time, he insists that we do not comprehend the divine existence. This should mean that we find it very dif-

25. Ibid., 32.
26. Ibid.

ficult to extend to God the understanding of existence that we have gained from the things that are the connatural objects of our mind. But for Gilson the problem seems to be the reverse. How can something that is perfection itself, unrestricted, subsistent existence, be thought of as a component of finite being?

Does Gilson say, *in verbis*, that the order of understanding and the order of being are identical? On the contrary, he seasons his texts with citations from Thomas that make it clear that for Thomas this is not the case. But Gilson's actual mode of procedure is one in which finite beings are approached from subsistent existence. The ineffability of God then trickles down to the finite act of existence. "Nothing can be said of being, even finite being, except that it is the act by which a being is or exists. Everything happens as though created *esse* shared in the mysterious character of the creative cause; and indeed, to conceive finite *esse* in itself and in the pure state would be a contradictory undertaking; it would be trying to conceive God."[27] Furthermore, "the notion of finite being is only incompletely comprehensible, and not only for us but also in itself, for God himself could not create by itself an act of being at once finite and self-subsistent."[28] One must come to terms with *pronunicamentos* like this.

Finite beings, that is, preeminently the commensurate and connatural object of the human mind, are incompletely comprehensible. Something may resist our efforts to comprehend it for two reasons: either because there is so little actuality in it, for example, prime matter, which must always be understood through the forms that actuate it, or because of an excess of intelligibility. For Thomas, the latter would be exemplified by the angels, say, or God, whose intelligibility far exceeds our capacity to grasp it. Gilson wants to locate in finite being a principle of incomprehensibility, *ut ita dicam*, and it is *esse*.

Working from the top down, Gilson remarks, paraphrasing Thomas, that *esse* is limited by the essence that receives it—but he puts it like this: "Finite being can only subsist as determined by something which is not pure being."[29] "Pure being" here is *esse* and the problem for Gilson is how can it unite with anything "for if there is nothing outside of being except nothing-

27. Ibid., 113. 28. Ibid., 114.
29. Ibid. This citation also covers the rest of the quotations in this paragraph.

ness, with what could *esse* enter into composition with except being?"[30] This leads him to sympathize with Suarezian objections, which "are unanswerable on the level of reason and quidditative being on which they are made." Indeed, there is a sense in which "the metaphysics of essences and quidditative concepts, far from being unintelligible, would be the natural metaphysics of the human mind, with its fondness for that *ratio intellecta* it forms with ease and on which it eagerly feeds. . . . It is good that the mind has as its disposal a metaphysics of essence, which is suitably called ontology." The Suarezian attributes to essence, that which is not *esse*, a kind of being. And indeed if "essence did not itself belong to a being, it would be nothing."[31] "Nothing" here must mean "nothing actual," but Gilson uses surprising language, saying that "essence indeed belongs to *esse*, but determined or limited." "Or rather," he adds, seemingly correcting himself, "we must grant that essence is the determination, delimitation, restriction and contraction of *esse*." This must be why Thomas calls essence a mode of being. It measures existence. But it is "through *esse* that everything else is something real and can contribute to the constitution of a being *(ens)*."[32] Essence becomes as mysterious as *esse* in Gilson's account since he insists that it owes whatever reality it has to *esse*. Surely this is a strained interpretation of Thomas: the essence is made actual by *esse*, but whatness is not a product of *esse*. This leads to a devaluation of essence. Gilson does not want to say that it is nothing; on the other hand, he speaks as if it owed its reality to *esse*, meaning it seems something more than actuality. Quoting Thomas to the effect that *esse* is the act of all acts, even of forms, and allowing that there is a mutual causality of essence and existence, he writes of essence or form that it "contributes only the mode in which the finite act of being can be exercised."

What Gilson is wary of is any suggestion that essence enjoys some kind of existence prior to being actuated by *esse*, but in order to make the point he seems to suggest that *esse* is an actuality prior to actuating the essence. This is one of the ambiguous results of starting from *ipsum esse subsistens*. But *esse* we might say is *only* the actuation of form and has no reality apart from that function. Finite *esse* cannot of course subsist.

30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 115. This covers the next quotation as well.
32. Ibid., 116.

The process that Thomas follows is what is wanting here. When it is, *esse* is first recognized as the actual inherence of the form in matter—it is not the matter, not the form, not the combination of them, but, so to say, their combining. For the natural thing to exist is for matter to be actuated by a form. Gilson comes to think of this as a forgetfulness of *esse*, as if one were equating form and *esse*. This seems to be the nub of his criticism of Cajetan. But it is clear that Gilson's Neoplatonic *via descensus*, taking the subsistent existence God as the starting point, leads to odd talk about both *esse* and essence. Thomas quotes with approval Aristotle's remark that *vivere est esse viventibus*: for a living thing to exist is for it to live, that is the kind of existence it has. Just as we would not not think of *vivere* apart from the living thing, so we should not think of *esse* as having any reality apart from the essence it actuates. They are coprinciples of being, related as act to potency, neither separable from the other. By beginning with *ipsum esse subsistens* Gilson speaks as if the finite act of existence had some reality on its own. But it is an effect, not a cause.

Thomas on Existence

There is an early text of St. Thomas in which he lays out the procedure he always follows, a procedure quite the reverse of that Gilson would attribute to him. It occurs in Thomas's exposition of the *De hebdomadibus* of Boethius and is prompted by one of the axioms, that is, the *per se nota* propositions that Boethius sets down as essential to solving the problem he confronts: Whether everything is good just insofar as it is. The axiom is the famous *diversum est esse et id quod est*. I propose to analyze closely Thomas's account of this axiom in the second lesson of his exposition.[33]

In the first lesson, Boethius has made his famous distinction between propositions that are self-evident *(per se nota)* for everyone and those that are self-evident only to the knowledgeable. He illustrates the first by "Equals taken from equals leave equals" and the latter by "Incorporeal things are not in place." Not everyone understands the meaning of the terms of that second proposition, but once instructed, one sees immediately that the proposition

33. *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia: Vol. 50. Expositio libri Boetii de ebdomadibus* (Rome, 1992), 270–74.

is true; that is, it is true in virtue of the meaning of its terms. The first kind of self-evident proposition uses terms the meanings of which no one could fail to know.

As he begins his consideration of the axioms themselves, Thomas notes that they use most familiar terms, namely, being, one, and good, and thus are intelligible to anyone. The first axiom, *diversum est esse et id quod est*, is explained by three ancillary axioms.

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The infinitive 'to be', as the grammatical designation suggests, is something common and undetermined that can be determined in either of two ways, on the part of the subject that has it, or on the part of the predicate, as when we say of something, not that it is simply, but that it is something like black or white.

The first thing Thomas says about *diversum est esse et id quod est* is that before it is applied to things it must be understood on the level of what it means. And we mean one thing by *esse* (to be) and another by *id quod est* (that which is), just as 'to run' means one thing and 'a runner' means another. Both 'to be' and 'to run' signify abstractly, like whiteness, whereas that which is, that is, being, and runner signify concretely, like white. Then he turns to the three subaxioms that explain the first axiom.

Ipsum enim esse nondum est, at vero quod est accepta essendi forma est atque consistit.

1. *Ipsum esse* doesn't signify the subject of existence, that which is, any more than 'to run' signifies the subject of that acitivity. We can no more say that existence is than we can say 'to run' runs. *Id quod est*, on the other hand, signifies the subject of existence *(subiectum essendi)* as 'he who runs' signifies the subject of running. We can say, then, of the one who runs that he runs insofar as he is the subject of running or participates in it. Similarly, we can say that being *(ens)* or that which is *(id quod est)* is insofar as it participates in the act of being *(actum essendi)*. Hence the axiom that says *ipsum enim esse nondum est*—that is, it is not the subject of existence—whereas *id quod est*, having received the form of existing, that is, *suscipiendo ipsum actum essendi*, is and subsists. Only substance is called being first and *per se* since it is substance that subsists; accidents, on the other hand, are called beings thanks to their subject.

Quod est participare aliquo potest, sed ipsum esse nullo modo aliquo participat. Fit enim participatio cum aliquid iam est; est autem aliquid cum esse susceperit.

2. The second explanation of the difference between *esse* and *id quod est* is based on participation. This is illustrated by the way in which Socrates participates in humanity, subject in an accident and matter in form, the substantial or accidental form being determined to this or that subject. Also, the effect is said to participate in its cause, particularly when it is not equal to or univocally named with its cause. This third mode of participation is not relevant here, but we can say that *ipsum esse* cannot particiapte in either of the first two ways. Being *(ens),* on the other hand, universal as it is, is nonetheless signified concretely and thus can participate in *ipsum esse*, in the way that the concrete participates in the abstract.

Id quod est habere aliquid praeterquam quod ipsum est potest: ipsum vero esse nihil aliud praeter se habet admixtum.

3. What is signified abstractly has nothing but what is intrinsic and essential to it. Thus 'humanity' signifies only what is essential to man, whereas of man can be predicated what is not true of him insofar as he is a man. Humanity is that whereby a man is a man and whatever is included in humanity is said of him *per se*. But the concretely signified is otherwise. To the white thing as white only what is meant by whiteness is predicated just as of man as man only what is meant by humanity is predicated. But a man's having humanity does not prevent him from having whiteness *per accidens*. Because *ipsum esse* signifies abstractly and *id quod est* concretely, therefore, the latter is said to be capable of having what does not pertain to it *per se*.

The second major axiom, following St. Thomas's analysis, is *Diversum est tantum esse aliquid et esse aliquid in eo quod est*. Thomas locates three supporting axioms under this as well.

Because *id quod est* can have something that is true of it *per se*, it is said to have a twofold existence *(duplex esse)*. Form is the principle of being *(essendi),* so that insofar as it has a given form it is said to be in a given way. If the form is not outside the essence of the one having it, its actually having that form enables us to say that it is simply, as man exists thanks to having a rational soul. But if the form is extraneous to the essence of the one having it, the

thing is not said to be simply because it has such a form, but only in a certain respect, as a man is said to be white.[34]

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The third major axiom according to Thomas is: *Omne simplex esse suum et id quod est unum habet; omni composito aliud est esse, aliud ipsum est.*

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After analyzing these axioms which involve being, Thomas moves on to the next, which involves the one. The composite and unity are modes of the one. Thomas reminds us that everything that has been said hitherto about the diversity of *esse* and *quod est* is based on the meanings of the terms: *secundum ipsas intentiones*. Now he will show how they are applied to things, first to composites, then to simples.

The first thing to consider is that, just as 'to be' and 'that which is' differ in meaning, so in composite things they differ really. This is clear from what has already been said. For it was said above that 'to be' itself neither participates in anything such that its nature is constituted by many things, nor does it have anything extrinsic added to it such that there should be accidental composition in it; therefore 'to be' itself is not a composite; the composed thing is not its *esse*; therefore he says that in every composite thing its *esse* is other than the composite, which is because it participates in existence.[35]

It is manifest how different Thomas's procedure is from the one Gilson attributes to him. As we would expect, clarity about the terms involved is gained first in reflecting on the commensurate object of our intellect, the

34. "Circa primum considerandum est quod ex quo id quod est potest aliquid habere preter suam essenciam, necesse est quod in eo consideretur duplex esse: quia enim forma est principium essendi, necesse est quod secundum quamlibet formam habitam habens aliqualiter esse dicatur. Si ergo forma illa non sit preter essenciam habentis, set constituat eius essenciam, ex eo quod habet talem forma dicetur habens esse simplicter, sicut homo ex hoc quod habet animam rationalem. Si veri sit talis form quae sit extranea ab essencia habentis eam, secundum illam formam non dicitur habens esse simplicter, set esse aliquid, sicut secundum albedinem homo dicitur esse albus" (ll. 153–66).

35. "Est ergo primo considerandum quod sicut esse et quod est differunt secundum intentiones, ita in compositis differunt realiter. Quod quidem manifestum est ex premissis. Dictum est enim supra quod ipsum esse neque participat aliquid ut eius ratio constituatur ex multis, neque habet aliquid extrinsecum admixtum ut sit in eo compositio accidentalis; et ideo ipsum esse non est compositum; res ergo composita non est suum esse; et ideo dicit quod in omni composito aliud est esse ens et aliud ipsum compositum quod est partiticpando ipsum esse" (ll. 204–15).

complex things that are the result of a change. *Ipsum esse* is of itself indeterminate, an infinitive, and it is determined either on the side of the subject that exists or on the side of accidental predicates attributed to the subject. The thing that is participates in existence in order to be. In the compound thing there is a twofold complexity: that of subject and essence and, within the essence, that of matter and form. Of the subject can be predicated not only what makes up its essence, but other things besides. *Forma est principium essendi*, whether this is substantial or accidental form. Substantial form is what determines *ipsum esse* on the side of the grammatical subject: 'Socrates, this man, exists': this is *esse substantiale*. 'Socrates is white': this is *esse accidentale*. The diversity of that which is and the existence it has thanks to its substantial form is more than a conceptual diversity: what the terms refer to are diverse. There is a distinction *realiter* between *quod est* and its *esse*. This contrasts notably with Gilson's reluctance to acknowledge the role of essence and form.

This clarity about the diversity of *esse* and *quod est* in the case of complex things had to be achieved before there could be any question of asking after the essence and existence of simple things. What we find in Boethius is that while the diversity of *esse* and *quod est* is both conceptual and real in complex things, in simple things it is only conceptual. The third major axiom according to Thomas is: *Omne simplex esse suum et id quod est unum habet; omni composito aliud est esse, aliud ipsum est.*

The identity of *esse* and *quod est* in simple things is a condition of their simplicity: if they differed, the thing would be complex, not simple. True enough, but Thomas introduces a significant distinction without which the world would be composed of complex things, on the one hand, and a unique simple thing, on the other.

> It should be noticed that since something is called simple because it lacks composition, nothing prevents a thing from being simple only in a certain respect, insofar as it lacks a certain composition, and yet is not wholly simple.[36]

36. "Est tamen considerandum quod, cum simplex dicatur aliquid ex eo quod caret compositione, nichil prohibet aliquid esse secundum quid simplex, in quantum caret aliqua compositione, quod tamen non est omnino simplex" (Ibid., ll. 221–25).

For example, fire and water are called simple bodies insofar as they lack the composition of contraries that is found in mixed bodies. A little Aristotelian lore, but the point is there are modes of simplicity, simplicity *tout court*, where all composition is lacking, and simplicity of a sort, where some composition is lacking. Thus, some things are more simple than others. "However, if there should be found to be forms that are not in matter, each of them would indeed be simple as lacking composition with matter, and quantity that is a disposition of matter. But because every form is determinative of existence, none of them is existence but rather has existence." Think of Plato's opinion that there is an immaterial form that subsists and is the Idea and nature *(ratio)* of material men, and another form that is the idea and nature of horses. Such immaterial subsisting forms are not identical with existence in all its amplitude *(ipsum esse commune)* but rather participate in it. Such immaterial subsistents, like those Aristotle proposed, are distinct from one another, because each is a special form that participates in existence, so none of them would be simple in every way.

> Only that will be truly simple that does not participate in existence: its existence is not inherent but subsistent. This can only be one because, if its existence has nothing else added to it that would be other than esse, as has been said, it is impossible for its existence to be multiplied by something diversifying it, and, since it has nothing else added to it, it follows that it is receptive of no accident. This simple being, one and sublime, is God himself.[37]

The *ipsum esse subsistens* that is God is reached at the end of the analysis so that our talk is controlled by and extended from the meaning the relevant terms have when we are speaking of complex things, the sensible things around us that are the commensurate object of our minds. As we shall see, this magnificent analysis of a magnificent text is a precis of metaphysics as Thomas understands it. Absent from it are the things that Gilson insists on: the guiding role of the text from Exodus, the consequent need to ground the analysis in

37. "Id autem solum erit uere simplex quod non participat esse, non quidem inherens set subsistens. Hoc autem non potest esse nisi unum, quia, si ipsum esse nichil aliud habet admixtum preter id quod est esse, ut dictum est, impossibile est id quod est ipsum esse mutiplicari per aliquid diuersificans, et, quia nichil aliud preter se habet adiunctum, consequens est quod nullius accidentis esset susceptiuum. Hoc autem simplex, unum et sublime est ipse Deus" (Ibid., 249–58).

Scripture and faith, the explanatory primacy of the divine existence, and the devaluing of the role of essence in the composition of finite things. Gilson rightly insists that essence exists only when it receives existence: it has no actual existence prior to that. What he did not perhaps meditate on sufficiently was the truth captured in the Boethian phrase: *ipsum enim esse nondum est*.

Gilson and Immortality

One of the items in Gilson's bill of particulars against Cajetan had to do with the immortality of the soul. He finds it significant that Cajetan brought up this problem in the course of commenting on the *De ente et essentia*. Indeed, he praises Cajetan for the faithfulness with which he has presented the thought of Thomas Aquinas. There is only one *esse substantiale* of a composite thing, since from a single form only one substantial act can result. Significantly for his own reading of Thomas, Gilson adds, "Doubtless, we are here again on the Aristotelian level, but that is exactly where St. Thomas is in the article in question (*ST*, Ia, q. 89, a. 1)."[38] Thomas is asking what mode of knowledge is possible for the soul separated from body. And Cajetan "with an astonishing perfection of style" recalls that the *esse* of man differs from that of a merely material composite. In the latter, form is given existence by the composite, in man the composite is given existence by the form. This disparity is due, Cajetan notes, to man's location between sensible things and pure spirits, partaking something of each. His existence flows from an intellectual soul, immaterial and of a higher order. The human soul can exist independently of the corrupted body. While praising Cajetan, Gilson nonetheless qualified his praise somewhat. "The emphasis, notice, is always on the form and the substance, but one cannot doubt that almost in the same words what Cajetan says here comes from Saint Thomas."[39] It is what Cajetan does not say that causes Gilson unease. True, *Summa theologiae* Ia, q. 75, a. 6 can be read in two different senses depending on whether one reads *quod per se habet esse* in the sense of the act of being or in the sense of the actual existence of the substance.[40] It is in the second of these alleged two senses that Ca-

38. *Cajetan et l'existence*, 279. 39. Ibid., 280.

40. "Dans Sum. Theol. I, 75, 6, saint Thomas lui-même peut être lu en deux sens différents selon qu'on interprête son *quod per se habet esse* dans le sens de l'acte d'être ou dans celui de l'existence actuelle de la susbtance" (Ibid.).

jetan reads the text since he writes *unum esse substantiale actualis existentiae*. But Gilson says it is difficult when reading this text not to remember something else from the preceding article. "The soul is an absolute form *(forma absoluta),* cause active de l'être de la matière *(causa essendi materiae, et agens);* reducing matter into the act of the form, causes its existence. Eveything here goes in Cajetan's direction, only (ad 3m),[41] although this subsistent form owes its existence to no other formal principle, it participates in the *esse* that it gives (ad 4m).[42] In the first of these texts, Thomas appeals to Aristotle and in the second to the Pseudo-Denis, leading Gilson to remark, "How Thomas can find in Denys his own *actus essendi*, est un autre secret thomiste" (281). Of course, Thomas has never shown any sign that he considers what he says about these matters to be original or a radical departure from what he had learned from Aristotle, Boethius, Denys, and so on. Still, he concedes that what Cajetan calls the substantial being of actual existence results, according to Thomas, from the substance's participation in the act that makes it exist. How does Gilson understand this participation? Talk about form and substance bothers him, but of course *forma dat esse*: the measure of the participated existence is the form. However it may be with Cajetan, and Gilson has not turned up anything he regards as incriminating, it is Gilson's understanding of Thomas's teaching on the soul that surprises. Speaking of death and the "passing away" of the body, Gilson writes,

> Yes, indeed, the "body" passes away, but the very matter of that body does not pass away, because, as a first principle, matter is both simple and incorruptible. And for the very same reason, the soul of the body does not pass away, because inasmuch as it is

41. "Ad tertium dicendum quod forma est causa essendi, et agens: unde agens, inquantum reducit materiam in actum formae transmutando, est ei causa essendi. Si quid autem est forma subsistens, non habet esse per aliquod formale principium, nec habet causam transmutantem de potentia in actum. Unde Philosophus concludit quod in his quae sunt composita ex materia et forma, 'nulla est alia causa nisi movens ex potestate ad actum: quaecumque vero non habent materiam, omnia simpliciter sunt quod vere entia aliquid.'" Gilson gives scant attention to the agent cause that is what reduces matter to the act of the form by transmuting it and is thus called the *causa essendi*. Is Gilson attributing such agency to *esse*?

42. "Ad quartum dicendum quod omne participatum comparatur ad participans ut actus eius. Quaecumque autem forma creata per se participet esse: quia etiam 'ipsa vita' vel quidquid sic diceretur, 'participat ipsum esse,' ut dicit Dionysius, 5 cap. De div. Nom. Esse autem participatum finitur ad capacitatem participantis. Unde solum Deus qui est ipsum suum esse, est actus purus et infinitus. In substantiis vero intellectualibus est compositio ex actu et potentia, sed ex forma et esse participato. Unde a quibusdam dicuntur componi ex 'quo est' et 'quod est' ipsum enim esse est quo aliquid est."

a spiritual substance, it also is both simple and incorruptible. This is the very reason why, in Thomas Aquinas' philosophy, the immortality of the human soul is an immediate evidence. It stands in no need of being proven.[43]

A more completely false statement about what Thomas Aquinas teaches can scarcely be imagined, but it is most revealing as an indication of what Gilsonian existentialism leads him into. What would have to be proven, he proclaims, is that the human soul is *not* immortal. Why does he say this? Because the human soul is a subsisting form and is in its own right. But that of course is the *conclusion* of the proof for the soul's immortality. It is cause for wonderment that someone who attributes such extraordinary and manifestly false doctrines to Thomas Aquinas should have sat in such severe judgment on Cardinal Cajetan. All Cajetan is guilty of is saying and explaining what Thomas Aquinas actually thought, whereas it is Gilson who fails to get the meaning of the text and ends by fabricating a Thomism that cannot be found in Thomas Aquinas.

Gilsonian Existence

Gilson makes his own the position of Kant that existence is not a predicate. In a passage that L.-M. Regis singled out for its importance, Gilson wrote:

It is not enough to say that *being* is inconceivable apart from existence; in a certain sense it must be said that *being* is always *conceived* by us apart from existence, for the simple reason that existence itself cannot possibly be *conceived*. The nature of this paradoxical fact has been admirably described by Kant in the famous passage of his *Critique of Pure Reason* which deals with the so-called ontological proof of the existence of God: "Being," Kant says, "is evidently not a real predicate, or a concept of something that can be added to a thing."[44]

Gilson went to great pains to justify his adoption of the Kantian position, as Regis acknowledges. His criticism turns on three points: the inconceivability of 'to be'; the impredicability of 'to be'; and the affirmation of existence.

What is the Thomisticity of Gilson's claim that the copula is not really a

43. *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Toronto, 1952), 162–63.

44. Ibid., 3. A significant portion of Regis's review is reprinted in the second edition on pp. 217–21.

term since it designates, not a concept, but the relation between two terms. This entails that the copula is not a noun. "In point of fact, it is the verb *is*."[45] Regis questions the inference that since the verb is not a noun that it signifies no concept. Thomas seems to say the contrary in his commentary on the *Perihermeneias*. We will be looking closely at that commentary.

What of Gilson's claim that in "Peter is," *is* does not predicate anything, not even existence. Rather, he says, it posits existence. His position follows from his denial that the verb signifies a concept. Regis observes that for Thomas *is* is the predicate par excellence. There are noun concepts, Regis says, and verb concepts and since 'to be' is the verb par excellence, it has a concept.

Finally, Regis distinguishes between conceiving existence and affirming existence.

We are fortunate to have Gilson's response to these statements to the effect that what he is attributing to Thomas is not to be found in Thomas. He begins with what looks to be a complete acceptance of the criticism. "No Thomist," Gilson concedes, "aiming to express the point of view of Thomas Aquinas as he himself would express it, should write that existence *(esse)* is not known by a concept."[46] Coming from an historian who has been so severe on other interpreters of Thomas, it is somewhat disarming to be told that "historically speaking, our own formulas are inaccurate" and that he should have made clear that he was not using the language of Saint Thomas. He defends himself by suggesting he had made Regis's point elsewhere in his text, and then goes on to say that 'concept' has also been taken in a more restricted sense, which indeed has become the common understanding of it "in consequence of the success of the 'essentialist' presentation of the metaphysical notion of being" (222). Thomas is not responsible for this, but Gilson, recovering a bit, suggests that all those Thomists who refuse to "ascribe to being a composition of essence and *esse*, are bound to reduce concepts to as many simple apprehensions of essences and our judgments to as many correlations of essences apprehended by way of concepts" (222). But he takes after E.A.M., another reviewer whom Gilson professes not to be able to identify (surely E. A. Moody), and says that the criticism he has received from that

45. Ibid., 190.
46. Ibid., 221.

reviewer "is the penalty one has to pay if, in the desire to recapture in its fullness the Thomisitc notion of being, he insists on composing it of essence and an *aliquid* 'other than essence'" (223). By denying that exists is a predicate, Gilson is hardly going counter to received opinion in the matter; apart from his concession to Regis, he would have been left allying Thomas with Kant *et sequaces eius*.[47] Surely it is disingenuous to suggest that he has opened himself to Regis's criticisms by his effort to make Thomas's view understood by those who deny a composition of essence and *esse*. Nor does the invocation here, and as the text for the appendix, *sapientis non est curare de nominibus*. Why, then, did he himself make such a to-do over *esse actualis existentiae*?

His defense against Regis's second point is similar: "predicate" and "predicability" have undergone remarkable transformations since the time of Thomas. Regis is right that he has misrepresented what Thomas actually says. What kind of defense is it to say that in the modern sense *esse* is not a predicate when it is a predicate for Thomas Aquinas? A reader of the text would be forgiven if he missed signs of this effort to make Thomas intelligible to modern philosophers.

Gilson wonders if what Thomas says in the commentaries is "always his deepest personal thought" (224). Does he mean that way down deep Thomas would deny that *is* is a predicate and that there is a concept of it? After reflecting on some texts Regis had mentioned, Gilson ends by suggesting that his own problem with such a proposition as 'Socrates is' is unanswered by them. "Obviously, the term 'Socrates' refers to an essence; but does its predicate refer to an essence as in the case of 'albus'? There is no problem as to its conceivability, I have a concept of 'existing Socrates,' which is the intelligible import of this judgment. Our own question is: if *est* is a predicate, what kind of predicate is it?" (225). The quick answer is that it is the predicate that attributes actual existence to Socrates. It is the predicate of predicates, the standard, hardly an enigmatic exception to the notion of predicate. But Gilson is willing to proceed on the concession that *est* is indeed a predicate for Thomas, but he now wishes to make problematical what he had apparently conced-

47. Barry Miller's *The Fullness of Being: A New Paradigm for Existence* (South Bend, Ind., 2002) is a sustained examination and rejection of the received view that existence is not a predicate. Miller offers, in fully analytic language, a magnificent defense of an understanding of existence that is remarkably akin to Thomas's.

ed to Regis. And he is led on to deny that *esse* inheres in essence—a denial of what Thomas says *in verbis*, as for example in the text of lectio 2 of the exposition of the *De hebdomadibus* we have examined.[48] To say that it logically inheres, but not metaphysically, far from mitigating the departure from Thomas, exacerbates it. Are we seeing yet another consequence of Gilson's reversal of the Thomistic order of procedure?[49]

It is not pleasant to subject anyone to such close criticism, but Gilson would not wish to be exempted from the kind of close analysis to which he has subjected such eminent Thomists as Cardinal Cajetan. One could multiply Gilsonian misreadings of Thomas but this must suffice to suggest that, alas, it is he whose writing amounts to a radical distortion of the thought of Thomas Aquinas. Most relevant for our purposes, by proposing that philosophy be swallowed up by theology and that what he regards as the *clef de voûte* of Thomas's metaphysics is dependent on revelation and faith, he has undermined the very point and possibility of the *praeambula fidei*.

48. When the divine *esse* is said to be *subsistens* it is being distinguished from the *esse inherens* that characterizes creatures:"Id autem solum erit uere simplex quod non participat esse, non quidem inherens sed subsistens" (ll. 249–51).

49. If we think of existence as inhering in the existing thing, we are said to run the risk of imagining that we are "in possession of a distinct concept of *esse* in itself, apart from the concept which we do have of 'Socrates conceived as existing'" (225). Gilson tried to soften the impact of Regis's criticism by allowing that there is a concept of existence, not as such, but on the basis of the understanding of *conceptio* of an existential judgment. But of course this just puts off the evil day, since we are back to asking what is meant by the predicate in an existential proposition. Thomas gives an answer, as Regis pointed out. Gilson is clearly a man in the grips of a theory—as Aristotle put it. He tries at the end to avoid the thrust of the criticism by calling it logical and not metaphysical.

PART THREE ~ *Thomism and Philosophical Theology*

PROLOGUE

1. The Path Before Us

There can be little dispute that at the outset of the *Summa theologiae* Thomas refers to the philosophical sciences as already known by his reader, pointedly asking if the philosophical science dubbed theology renders redundant the effort he is about to undertake. At least historically, then, the philosophical sciences are distinguished from the *sacra doctrina* that is studied in the *Summa* and the beginner for whom the *Summa* was written is assumed already to have studied philosophy and thus likely to have the problem addressed by the opening discussion. But there is as well general agreement among students of St. Thomas that philosophical work is not only presumed by the theologian; philosophizing also seems contemporary with and intrinsic to the task of *sacra doctrina*. Indeed, it soon strikes a reader of the *Summa* that clarity on certain philosophical points is sought prior to making use of that doctrine to explicate Sacred Scripture.[1] Furthermore, Thomas often contrasts the philosopher's and the theologian's approach to a given topic—for example, the soul[2]—in a way that suggests a contemporary option. Nonetheless, as we have seen, an extremely influential Thomist, Etienne Gilson, ended by so confining Thomas's philosophy to a theological setting that it is difficult to see how philosophy so understood could be shared by nonbelievers. But if there is any mark of the arguments and analyses that make up the

1. For example, in *ST* Ia, q. 14, a. 16, Thomas clarifies the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge and the degrees of the latter before addressing the question as to whether God's knowledge of creatures is speculative or practical.

2. "Naturam autem hominis considerare pertinet ad theologum ex parte animae, non autem ex parte corporis, nisi secundum habitudinem quam habet corpus ad animam" (*ST*, Ia, Prologue to q. 75). See too II SCG 4: "Et propter hoc etiam alia circa creaturas et Philosophus et Fidelis considerat. Philosophus namque considerat illa quae eis secundum naturam propriam conveniunt: sicut igni ferri sursum. Fidelis autem ea solum considerat circa creaturas quae eis conveniunt secundum quod sunt ad Deum relata: utpote quod sunt a Deo creata, quod sunt Deo subiecta, et huiusmodi."

praeambula fidei, it is that they are independent of faith and Scripture, something of which human beings are naturally capable.

The rescue of the *praeambula fidei* requires a multitude of expositions, refutations, and corrections, and the reestablishing of the true meaning of phrases that have become mere slogans. We must be clear about what Thomas meant by philosophy, by a philosophical science, by a philosophical argument. We must understand what he meant by metaphysics. The animus against Aristotle exceeds even that against Cardinal Cajetan on the part of several of the Thomists we considered in Part Two. Of course, no one could plausibly deny the dominant role that Aristotle's thought played for Thomas Aquinas: Aristotelian doctrine pervades the theological writings of Aquinas. Thomas's language would be unintelligible without an awareness of its dependence on the man he called "The Philosopher." There are two possible explanations of this presence of Aristotelianism: either Thomas adopted the principles and procedures of philosophy as taught by Aristotle because he thought they were true, or he had a different conception of philosophy than Aristotle's into which he was able to assimilate Aristotelian tenets as well as others. In favor of the second alternative is the fact that Thomas also exhibited sympathy for Platonic teachings. Must there not, then, be a larger whole, a specifically Thomistic philosophy, into which both Platonic and Aristotelian elements fit to the degree that they are in accord with its principles? I will endeavor to show that the first alternative is the correct one. The second has plausibility because Thomas did indeed advance the Aristotelian program beyond Aristotle and showed the kind of hospitality to Neoplatonism mentioned. But this, I argue, was done in terms of a philosophical outlook that is fundamentally Aristotlelian.[3] Moreover, there are no peculiarly Thomistic philosophical principles that could supplant the Aristotelian ones he adopts.

I shall be making use of the full range of Thomas's writings and this emphatically includes his expositions of the treatises of Aristotle. These commentaries are among his most mature works, the first of them dating from 1268 and all composed prior to 1273 during a period when Thomas was bur-

3. Any reader of St. Thomas's exposition of the so-called *Liber de causis*, which Thomas shows has its origin in Proclus's *Elements of Theology*, must be struck by his concern to show the compatibility of this Neoplatonic work with the thought of Aristotle.

dened with the tasks of a regent master at Paris as well as a variety of other writing projects. Many Thomists in recent years have adopted strange views about the commentaries.[4] This matter—the nature of the Thomistic commentaries on Aristotle—can be discussed with profit but what I propose to do is make use of the commentaries in such a way that it will be crystal clear that what emerges from them is integral to the thought of Thomas Aquinas.

The theology of the philosopher reposes on a number of disciplines that precede it: theology, after all, is the culmination of the philosophical task. The philosophical science that is called theology is also called metaphysics, and so clarity about the nature of metaphysics is essential to clarity on the question before us. But metaphysics is learned after and depends upon natural philosophy as well as on the other philosophical sciences, and of course on logic. First of all, it is necessary to be clear what a science is for Thomas Aquinas: that can be found in the *Posterior Analytics* and his commentary on it. It is also necessary to examine natural philosophy because, unless it can be proved that something immaterial exists, being will be synonymous with material being and natural philosophy will be the culminating task of the philosopher. It is only after being is shown not to be identical with material being that the possibility of a science of being as being arises. Only by repeating the steps of the *Metaphysics* will we come into possession of what Thomas means by natural theology. And only then can we ask the question with which the *Summa theologiae* begins: What need is there for any science beyond the philosophical sciences?

2. Aristotelian Thomism

In Part Two we examined three scholars, all of whom claim that the Thomistic tradition failed to present Thomas correctly. "The greatest obstacle to the diffusion of Thomas, even in the Dominican Order, was Aristotle, and Cajetan who was his prophet." It will be remembered that when Gilson criticizes Cajetan as often as not it is because Cajetan allegedly gives us Aristotle

4. Views on the nature of the commentaries will be discussed below. In his dedication of the commentary on the Perihermeneias to the provost of Louvain, who had asked for it, Thomas remarked that he had undertaken to satisfy the request and explain a work "multis obscuritatibus involuto, inter mutiplices occupationum mearum sollicitudines."

and not Thomas. The point is not simply that Thomas might have said more than Aristotle on a given point, but that there is enmity between Thomas and Aristotle. This would indeed have come as something of a surprise to the long tradition of Catholic thought influenced by Thomas Aquinas.

It is noteworthy that post-Tridentine Catholic philosophy gave Aristotle pride of place along with St. Thomas, as evidenced in the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* and in the work of Sylvester Maurus, both of course associated with the Collegio Romano, the forerunner of the Gregorian University. Furthermore, there is an untroubled use of the hyphenated Aristotelico-Thomism in the first phase of the Thomistic Revival initiated by Leo XIII.

It might be thought that it was developments in Aristotelian studies, notably the enormously influential work of Werner Jaeger, that led to a distancing of Thomas from Aristotle. While many Thomists reacted to the genetic interpretations of Aristotle, these do not seem to have played much of a role, and certainly not a decisive one, in the decreasing use of the phrase "Aristotelico-Thomist philosophy." Rather it has been the contention that Thomas's teaching on existence, on *esse*, represents a radical departure from Aristotle and grounds principles of metaphysics *toto coelo* different from those of Aristotle. It is the rare existential Thomist who so much as alludes to the problems posed by the genetic interpretation of Aristotle.

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One way in which we can see the untroubled sense of an organic link between Aristotle and St. Thomas is to consider what happened during and after the Council of Trent. This council, which took so long to convene, lasted from 1545 to 1563. The formation of the Society of Jesus is rightly seen to have provided one of the most effective instruments of the Counter-Reformation. The Collegio Romano was but one of hundreds of Jesuit colleges that spread across Europe and into America. In 1599, after much preliminary work, the *Ratio Studiorum* appeared, a guide for all those far-flung schools. The colleges trained Jesuits, laypeople, and diocesan priests. The system of education laid out in the *Ratio* was the one Descartes knew at LaFlèche.

In the rules for professors of philosophy, the first point made is that all the arts and natural sciences are ordered to theology. The second is that Aristotle is to be followed save in those few doctrines that are incompatible with the faith. Those errors are to be refuted. Furthermore, those commentators

on Aristotle hostile to Christianity are to be eschewed or cited with caution. Professors are to avoid identifying with a school of interpretation and they should refute the Averroists, the Alexandrines, and so on when needed.

St. Thomas Aquinas is always to be invoked with praise, his thought is to be followed, and when the professor is in disagreement this is to be muted. The course in philosophy, which lasted three years, was logic (employing Fonseca and Toldeo) based on the Aristotelian organon; the *Physics*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *De coelo*, going on to the *Metaphysics*. Paragraph 12 says that the text of Aristotle is to be treated with the greatest esteem and students are to be taught that departure from Aristotle will stunt their learning.

Given the number, dispersal, and influence of the Jesuit colleges, this program of studies with its close linking of Aristotle and Thomas is of the first importance. In the seventeenth century, Sylvester Maurus (1619–1687), once rector of the Collegio Romano, produced in several volumes a summary of Aristotle that was widely disseminated. In the Dominican *studia*, the link with Aristotle was kept, but the Dominicans did not create schools with the abandon of the Jesuits, though we do find many of them in the Latin American universities during the colonial period.[5]

The first phase of the Thomistic Revival of modern times exhibits this same assumption of the closeness of Aristotle and Thomas. Indeed, in 1926, in the first volume of the *Revue Thomiste*, F.-X. Maquart—who would be one of the participants at the Juvisy conference on Christian philosophy—published a series of articles meant to show that Aristotle did indeed teach the real distinction between *esse* and *essentia* that Thomas attributed to him. Maquart was answering a criticism by Rougier.

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How did it come about that Thomists saw enmity between Aristotle and Thomas? Or, more mildly, became convinced that there was a radical difference between the two, and that the basis for the difference is the real distinction between *esse* and *essentia*?

The genetic approach to the writings of Aristotle was given a great boost by Werner Jaeger's 1912 book on the evolution of the *Metaphysics* and his 1923

5. See Romanus Cessario, O.P., "Cajetan and His Critics," *Nova et Vetera* 3, no. 1 (2005), as well as his *Le thomisme et les thomistes* (Paris: Cerf, 1999).

book *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*.[6] Jaeger's view was, roughly, that Aristotle had evolved from a Platonist to an anti-Platonist view and that this development can be seen in the treatises themselves. The fourteen books of the *Metaphysics* do not make up a literary whole; they were likely compiled by Andronicus of Rhodes three hundred years after Aristotle from materials written over time and without an eye to becoming a single work; indeed, the materials were not meant for publication, but for use by Aristotle's pupils, first in the Academy and, after the death of Plato, in Aristotle's own Lyceum. According to Jaeger, the ordering of these "books" is more or less arbitrary, and they contain incompatible views on key issues.

Twentieth-century Aristotelian studies were all but defined by this Jaegerian thesis. A very useful volume to get a swift sense of this is Roberto Radice and Richard Davis's *Aristotle's Metaphysics Annotated Bibliography of the Twentieth Century Literature*, with a "Foreword" by Giovanni Reale.[7] There were of course dissenting voices, notably that of Franz Brentano, but there was little opposition from Thomists. Such scholars as Auguste Mansion and Joseph Owens[8] contributed important studies on Jaeger's hypothesis, but however much they questioned its details, there was acceptance of the view that it is impossible to see the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle as a literary whole.

That this poses a problem for students of St. Thomas is obvious. Just leafing through Thomas's commentary on the *Metaphysics* reveals the problem the genetic approach should have created. For Thomas, the *Metaphysics* is a work of a remarkable order, not only among the books, but among the chapters of each book, and indeed within each chapter as well. The thing most insisted on by Thomas as commentator is the order of the work. If Jaeger is right, the commentaries of Thomas on Aristotle must seem fantastic. If what we are confronted with is a collection of lecture notes on similar or related subjects that in no way pretend to be a literary whole, the commentator who proceeds as Thomas does must be the object of derision. By contrast to the treatises, 52 Pickup would seem a card game of skill. Of course the whole commentary tradition would suffer the same fate, the Neoplatonist

6. nd ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933. Translated by R. Robinson.

7. Published by Brill in 1997. On Jaeger, see the editors' summaries of his two books in notes on pages 54 and 55.

8. Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978).

commentators, the medieval commentators, the Renaissance commentators, and, we might say, most Aristotelian interpretations prior to the twentieth century. What was a Thomist to do?

Perhaps prompted by these developments in Aristotleian studies, Thomist scholars began to ask what exactly Thomas was doing as a commentator, notably Martin Grabmann in *Die Aristoteleskommentare des heiligen Thomas von Aquin in Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, published in Munich in 1916 (it had already appeared in French in 1914 in the Louvain journal).

Jacques Maritain appended to his first book, *La philosophie bergsonienne*, an appendix called "Glosses on Aristotle" in which he reprints his reviews of Hamelin and Chevalier on Aristotle. He also discusses the nature of a Thomistic commentary. Later, Father Chenu, in his *Introduction à l'étude de saint Thomas*, provided an important discussion of the commentaries. A high point of Maritain's discussion is his treatment of the following questions:

Does Aristotle deny that God has knowledge of the world?
Does Aristotle deny that God is the world's efficient cause?
Does Aristotle deny creation, that is, causation *ex nihilo*?
Does Aristotle deny personal immortality?

In the thirteenth century there had been discussion of the "errors of Aristotle," the three main ones being his supposed denials that God knows the world, that the human soul is immortal, and his undoubted claim that the world is eternal. In different ways, Thomas had defended Aristotle against these charges, and the polemical atmosphere of his second sojourn in Paris prompted him to write many commentaries on Aristotle's text (he did a dozen in all, if we include the tabula to the *Ethics*), as well as two polemical opuscula, the *De aeternitate mundi contra murmurantes* and the *De unitate intellectus contra averroistas*.[9] In effect, Maritain was defending Thomas's reading of Aristotle.

This controversy, recalled by Maritain, might seem to be simply a quarrel among commentators who shared basic assumptions about the works of Ar-

9. The Leonine text and a translation, as well as several interpretative essays, can be found in my *Aquinas against the Averroists: On There Being Only One Intellect* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1993). See now Alain de Libera, *L'unité de l'intellect de Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2004).

istotle. One dismissive characterization of Thomas's reading of the text is the suggestion that he "baptized" Aristotle. This meant that, wherever there was in the text of Aristotle teaching in conflict with Christianity, Thomas put a spin on the text that brought it into conformity with the faith. This libelous characterization gained new life toward the end of the twentieth century from Thomists who seemed to assume that Aristotle properly understood was different from the Aristotle presented by St. Thomas.

Standing athwart any effort to see Thomas's resolutions of these "errors of Aristotle" as baptizing Aristotle, that is, making the text mean something other than it does for purposes of employing a radically altered Aristotle for religious purposes, is the clear evidence of the *De unitate intellectus*. No one can read this opusculum, with its painstaking textual analyses and rejection of alternative readings, and fail to see that it was Thomas's intention to understand what Aristotle himself meant—and only then to defend the truth of it.

It would be one thing to say that Thomas tried and failed in this task, and quite another to ascribe to him a mendacious procedure. To this day, Thomas's reading of *De anima* III is a severely minority opinion among Aristotelians, but the only way to settle the matter is by appeal to the text, which is what Thomas does to a fare-thee-well in the *De unitate*. No account of the commentaries that sees them as benign distortions can survive the careful—or even cursory—reading of them.

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Such discussions, however, more or less bypass the genetic approach. What is one to make of the commentaries with their insistence on the unity of treatises as over against the Jaegerian view that the treatises are not literary wholes and cannot be thought to possess the order of such wholes?

Giovanni Reale concedes the Jaegerian point that the *Metaphysics* is not a literary whole, but denies that this admission tells against the philosophical unity of the treatise.[10] Reale has done more than anyone else to make Thomas's reading of the *Metaphysics* justifiable—I do not suggest that this was his intention. There is of course no apriori way of settling the question, say by general remarks about what a medieval commentary is. Only a close reading

10. Giovanni Reale, *Il concetto di filosofia e l'unità della Metafisica di Aristotele*, 5th ed. (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1993).

of the commentary as a reading of the Aristotelian text can possibly settle the matter. There are some, for example, Père Gauthier, the Leonine editor of many of the commentaries on Aristotle, for whom such a close reading has led to somewhat negative judgments, as for example his dismissal of the commentary on the *Ethics* as an *oeuvre de chic*, but such negative judgments make appeals to the text that can be appraised, agreed with or disagreed with, by appeal to the text.

Barker, the translator into English of the *Politics*, found that the close reading translating requires makes the hodgepodge view of the *Politics* untenable; he became a recovered geneticist due to his effort.

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But what even more than the genetic approach to the text has led some Thomists to see a gap between Aristotle and Thomas in metaphysics is the prominence given to the real distinction between essence and existence. Convinced that this distinction, or its role, is unique to Thomas, without historical antecedents, such Thomists present us with a Thomism without sources on this central point as well as without much of a history after Thomas, with most later Thomists being accused of having misunderstood Thomas on this key point.

The Thomist who would make the real distinction unique or original to Thomas must face the considerable difficulty that Thomas does not agree with him. He himself attributes knowledge of this distinction to Aristotle, Boethius, others. . . . Indeed, in commenting on the *De hebdomadibus* of Boethius, he accepts that treatise's placement of *diversum est esse et id quod est* among propositions *per se notae*, self-evident, and not self-evident *quoad sapientes*, but *quoad omnes*. On that basis, it looks as if it would be more difficult to overlook the distinction than to recognize it.

In what follows I will take it to have been established that the Jaegerian approach to Aristotle has been rendered untenable by the work of Giovanni Reale and others. It is not enough simply to weary of the endless wrangling that the genetic approach generated, to set it aside, and to read Aristotle as he has always been read.[11] The best refutation in my view is a close reading of the *Metaphysics* in the light of Thomas's commentary on it. The assumption

11. This may be said to characterize the useful summaries of Aristotle's philosophy given by D. J. Allen, Marjorie Grene, Henry Babcock Veatch, and others.

of this study is that the native habitat of the *praeambula fidei* is the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle and that its recovery can only be accomplished by seeing it in that setting. Since the discussion of God is found in Book 12 of the work, attention must be paid to how Aristotle arrived at that discussion. This will entail a cursory but nonetheless substantive reading of the *Metaphysics* as the coherent whole it is. In doing this, we will be taking into account internal and external difficulties to that coherent reading. The hoped-for result will be to see in what sense metaphysics is a theology, the sense that makes the *praeambula fidei* the crowning and defining term not only of metaphysics but of the whole of philosophy.

Seven ~ THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF METAPHYSICS

1. What Is a Science?

In Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle discusses the intellectual virtues, both those of practical intellect and those of theoretical or speculative intellect. The object or aim of the latter is truth, that of the former the guidance of action in doing or making. "Let it be assumed that the states by virtue of which the soul possesses truth by way of affirmation and denial are five in number, that is, art, scientific knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophic wisdom, intuitive reason; we do not include judgment and opinion because in these we may be mistaken" (VI.3). He begins the discussion of these five with science. "We all suppose that what we know is not even capable of being otherwise; of things capable of being otherwise we do not know, when they have passed outside our observation, whether they exist or not" (Ibid.). The object of scientific knowledge is necessary and eternal, and eternal things are ungenerated and imperishable.

> Again, every science is thought to be capable of being taught, and its object of being learned. And all teaching starts with what is already known, as we maintain in the *Analytics* also; for it proceeds sometimes through induction and sometimes by syllogism. (Ibid.)

Induction moves toward universal principles, syllogism proceeds from them. The starting points of syllogistic reasoning are not themselves reached by syllogistic reasoning, since otherwise we would be involved in an infinite regress. Hence the role of induction. Having recalled these marks of it, Aristotle provides a definition of scientific knowledge: "a state or capacity to demonstrate, and has the other limiting characteristics which we specify in the *Analytics*; for it is when a man believes in a certain way and the starting points are known to him that he has scientific knowledge, since if they are

not better known to him than the conclusion, he will have his knowledge only incidentally" (Ibid.).

One can of course know things for certain that are not necessary, as individual sensible things and facts—for example, "Your rear tire is flat." But such episodic truths do not answer to the ideal of knowing what cannot be otherwise, knowing what is essential as opposed to what is incidental about individuals.[1] That a given tire is flat or not is a matter of observation; of course one can know what makes tires flat and that would be true of all of them and could be taught and learned. Pneumatology as a discipline would arise and expand. A science of artifacts? But the study of tires could lead on to natural truths about air and its properties under various conditions, and these properties would be recognized as not being produced by the art that exemplifies them. If such experience bears on sensible particulars, does science bear on some other range of objects? One of the sources of Plato's Forms or Ideas was just this realization that contingent particulars cannot as such be the object of knowledge in the strong sense because knowledge in the strong sense implies necessity. Such knowledge of natural things is of the singulars of experience but in terms of what is essential to them. It is the *way* they are known and *what* in them is known that distinguishes science from mere experience or factual knowledge. What is known is the nature or essence of sensible particulars.

2. Our Mind's Commensurate Object

The nature of human knowing and the commensurate object of our knowledge provides an indication of how difficult for us knowledge of God is. On the assumption that God is not some sensible thing whose nature we can conceive in the usual way but something that transcends the sensible realm, it will seem that knowledge of God is ruled out. On the other hand, there seems reason to say that nothing is more natural to us than knowledge of God. On one occasion at least, Thomas says that it is easy to know God.[2]

1. Cf. *In VI Ethic.*, lectio 3, n. 1145: ". . . et non sequi similitudines, secundum quas quandoque dicimur scire sensibilia de quibus certi sumus, Sed certa ratio scientiae hinc accipitur, quod omnes supicamur de eo quod scimus qod non contingat aliter se habere: alioquin non esset certitudo scientis, sed dubitatio opinantis."

2. ". . . dicendum quod deum esse, quantum est in se, est per se notum, quia sua essentia est

How can knowledge of God be seemingly ruled out by the range of human knowing and at the same time be the defining telos of human life?

Well, is the latter true? Is it the case that human beings just as such desire to know God? What would polling turn up if people were quizzed on this issue? Of course, the claim is not based on a survey of that sort, but on the nature of any human act. A human act is something undertaken for the sake of some end; it is the end in view that enables us to distinguish this act from that, going to McDonalds, say, from going to confession. The end in view is a good, something pursued as fulfilling or perfective of the agent: this is implicit in any action. We wouldn't do what we do, we wouldn't do anything, unless we assumed that the doing of it was preferable to the not doing of it, that is, that it is good for us to do it. Such ends are of myriad sorts, not just as individual objects of desire but as kinds of object of desire. Nonetheless, they can all be brought under one predicably universal description: desired as perfective or fulfilling of the agent. That is what good means and in particular it is what the end as good means.

So what? There is some overall good of the human agent that is in play whatever he does. Sweets are good for taste buds, exercise tones up muscles, a nap refreshes, seeing can be delightful. But it is not our taste buds that act when we have an ice cream cone; it is not tense muscles that initiate exercise, the eye does not explain my watching a ball game. *I* do these things. They are chosen as good for *me*, not just as good for my taste buds or my muscles, or my eyes. They are chosen as elements of my overall good.

But aren't there as many accounts of overall good as there are human agents, or almost as many? Surely there is wide variation and disagreement on what the comprehensive overall point of acting is. To suggest that there is the same comprehensive aim of each and every human agent will not only collide with the fact that this would come as news to many, but that pressing it might seem to lead to such homogenization that a plurality of human agents would become redundant. How put together the wide legitimate variation in overall aim and the claim that there is a "good for man," an ultimate end that is fulfilling of every human agent?

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suum esse—et hoc modo loquitur Anselmus—non autem nobis qui eius essentiam non videmus. Sed tamen eius cognitio nobis innata esse dicitur, in quantum per principia nobis innata de facili percipere possumus deum esse" (*In de trinitate Boethii* [ed. Decker], q. 1, a. 3, ad 6).

We could first ask what an illegitimate variation would be. How could we rule out as unacceptable an agent's proposed view of what the overall purpose of life is? Imagine someone saying that he just wants to enjoy himself and he will so act that his enjoyment will be maximized and his frustrations minimized. He will just "go for all the gusto he can get." Why not? What's wrong with hedonism? What's wrong with making wealth or power or position or prestige the dominant aim of one's life? The classical answer is that such things simply cannot fill the bill as what is fulfilling of a human being, given what a human being is. The reverse of this of course is that many life plans really are fulfilling of what the human agent is; there is an acceptable variety as well as an unacceptable variety.

Minimally, the human agent is complex. There are certain drives and desires that simply occur, naturally, independently, and prior to anything we do. What *we* do is conscious and deliberate and takes into account these prerational natural desires, for food and drink and pleasure and the like. The classical notion of virtue may be said to insist that these natural desires must be put to the service of the agent as such, not the reverse, as if we had a mind only to enhance our pursuit of the pleasures of sense.[3]

The life of virtue, that is, bringing the passions and emotions under the sway of reason so that they are directed to the overall good of the agent, is the good for man. Temperance integrates the desire for pleasure into a life plan. Courage masters the fear of death lest it deflect us from our overall good. Justice takes into account that our good is a shared good, a common good, and that others must be treated accordingly.

The mind as directing in this way is mind practical; but the mind can also be used theoretically, that is, in pursuit of the truth, not the truth of practice or action, but truth in the sense of the way things are. If a virtuous life is an instance of rational activity, the pursuit of truth as such is a more perfectly rational life. It is the good of reasoning as such, truth, that is the aim. In the nature of things, accordingly, the speculative or contemplative life is the implic-

3. As an extreme project, as what Kierkegaard calls the "aesthetic life," the task is by definition impossible and absurd: the aesthete puts his mind to leading a mindless life, seeks to make the life of passions and emotions all. But they cannot be all since that is not all a human person is. "Are passions then the pagans of the soul, reason alone baptized?" Kierkegaard quotes the English poet Young for the motto of his *Either/or*. The ethical life is the integration of reason and passion.

it aim of every agent. So it is that, at the outset of the *Metaphysics*, by glossing the claim that "all men by nature desire to know," Aristotle is led to recognize that knowledge of the first causes of all things, knowledge of the divine, theology, is the overall aim of human life.

As implicit in any action, knowledge of God is natural and, as it were, easy for us; for all that, as made explicit, the overall aim of human life, the telos of philosophy, is almost beyond our capacity.

The human mind is the capacity of a being composed of body and soul. In our corporeal nature we share characteristics with rocks and stones and plants and birds and primates. The chemical composition of the human body involves elements found as well in nonhumans. Taking nourishment and growing are not peculiar to humans but common to living things. The external senses, imagination and desire, hopes and fears—these are not peculiar to human beings. This is made explicit in that magnificent opening of the *Metaphysics*. How does Aristotle begin to illustrate that all men by nature desire to know? "A sign of this is the delight we take in the senses, particularly the sense of sight." Sense perception is an instance of knowing. The relation between knower and known is not something causal, since not every cause–effect relation would provide us with an instance of knowing. One rock sets another in motion but neither the moved nor the mover know one another. Physical causality is involved in sensation but as a condition of its occurring. My hand on the table involves a mutual alteration of temperatures but touch is awareness of the other. Sitting in the sun I turn red but when I turn and see red I come into possession of it differently. I have the redness in seeing it not in the sense that there is another numerical instance of red in the world: seeing red is not becoming red in the way a surface does. Or it is becoming red in another way.

3. The Modalities of Change

For reasons that will now be made clear, Thomas, on the basis of the above, defines knowing as "having the form of another: *habens formam alterius*." Understanding this definition is dependent on an understanding of the change to which knowing was contrasted above—for example, Fifi Larue getting a sunburn—and this introduces us to the analogies that make up phi-

losophy and that are of fundamental importance for grasping what Thomas has to say about our knowledge of God. "We name things as we know them" (secundum igitur quod aliquid a nobis intellectu cognosci potest, sic a nobis potest nominari).[4] This home truth is introduced to emphasize that God is known from his effects and consequently is named from his effects. His effects are manifestly the sensible things around us, and it is these with which our intellect has most affinity and with which it begins. Let us have this text before our eyes.

Respondeo dicendum quod, secundum Philosophum, voces sunt signa intellectuum, et intellectus sunt rerum similitudines. Et sic patet quod voces referentur ad res significandas, mediante conceptione intellectus. Secundum igitur quod aliquid a nobis intellectu cognosci potest, sic a nobis potest nominari. Ostensum est autem supra quod Deus in hac vita non potest a nobis videri in suam essentiam; sed cognoscitur a nobis ex creaturis, secundum habitudines principii, et per modum excellentiae et remotionis. (Ia, q. 13, a. 1)

I answer that the response should be that Aristotle teaches that voiced sounds are signs of concepts and concepts are likenesses of things, from which it is clear that words are used to signify things by way of the intellect's conception. Insofar, then, as something can be known by our intellect, to that degree it can be named by us. But it was shown earlier that in this life God cannot be seen by us in his essence, but is known by us from creatures, according to the relation of cause, and by way of excellence and by way of negation.

It is of course well known that for Thomas God is known and named on an analogy with creatures and this doctrine has rightly been the object of much discussion and interpretation.[5] It would be wrong to think that analogy is something that is fashioned *ad hoc* in order to deal with the limit case of extending our language to the source of all reality. The theory of knowledge and of language in play here in what will come to be called "natural theology" characterizes Thomas's practice from first to last. If we tried to grasp what is meant by calling God "Pure Act" or in speaking of "Subsistent Forms" without reference to the slow buildup needed to render such talk intelligible, we would run the risk of seeing it as a kind of jargon, a technical language in a

4. *ST* Ia, q. 13, a. 1.

5. I will take the liberty of referring to my *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996).

more or less stipulated sense. Nothing could be farther from the terminological practice of Thomas Aquinas. In such matters, the wise course is to begin at the beginning, to go on to the middle, and to finally get to the end.

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The opening of the *Metaphysics*, to which reference has been made, reveals that the ultimate goal of the pursuit of knowledge is such knowledge as we can achieve of the divine. This theology can only be engaged in against the background of a host of earlier inquiries the successful outcome of which opens the way to further inquiry. It is only implicit in the opening chapters of the *Metaphysics*, but "philosophy" is an umbrella term that covers an ordered set of disciplines. There is a place to begin and a route to be taken if we want to get to the end. In several places, Thomas sets down the proper order of learning the philosophical disciplines.[6] In the *Metaphysics* itself, when he seeks to characterize "the science we are seeking," he will invoke the two nonproblematic instances of speculative science, natural science and mathematics.

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If Thomas has this sense of orderly procedure in learning[7] generally, it does not stay at the level of generality. It has become fashionable to deny that

6. E.g., in his proeemium to his commentary on the *Liber de Causis*: "Et inde est quod philosophorum intentio ad hoc principaliter erat ut, per omnia quae in rebus considerabant, ad cognitionem prmarum causarum pervenirent. Unde scientiam de primis causis ultimo ordinabant, cuius considerationi ultimum tempus suae vitae deputarent: primo quidem incipientes a logica quae modum scientiarum tradit, secundo procedentes ad matematicam cuius etiam pueri possunt esse capaces, tertio ad naturalem philosophiam quae propter experientiam tempore indiget, quarto autem ad moralem philosophiam cuius iuvenis esse conveniens auditor non potest, ultimo autem scientiae divinae insistebant quae considerat primas entium causas" (*Sancti Thomae de Aquino super librum De Causis expositio*, ed. H. D. Saffrey, O.P. [Fribourg, 1954], 2). This proeemium is a florilegium of Aristotelian texts, and references to Aristotle abound in the commentary on this Neoplatonic text. It would be wrong to see this as measuring Proclus on the Procrustean bed of Aristotelianism, as if these were radical options and could only be compared by means of distortion. The disarming assumptions of Thomas Aquinas are (1) that all philosophers are in principle engaged in the same enterprise; (2) that truths he has learned from Aristotle are simply truths, not "Aristotelian tenets"; and (3) consequently that such truths as one finds in Neoplatonism or anywhere else must be compatible with truths already known. This is the basis for saying that Thomism is not a *kind* of philosophy.

7. Of course this is a matter of *disciplina*, learning and teaching, not of *inventio*, or discovery. There are logical guidlelines for discovery but the route of the autodidact will be torturous. Eventually, the shortcut of teaching and learning becomes possible, and that is what Thomas is ordering here.

Thomism is a system and doubtless there are many senses of *system* in which it is not one, but nothing can be clearer than that Thomas had a very detailed notion of what systematic procedure is and of how essential it is if the goal of knowledge is to be reached. Thus we find a similar sense of priority and posteriority when he discusses procedure in natural science. That what he has to say echoes Aristotle is too obvious to require reiteration, but in attributing the following to Thomas I am not suggesting either ownership or originality—neither one of these notions registers on his philosophical radar. In his famous remark, the object of study is not to learn what others have said, but what the truth of the matter is. Nor does this preclude gratitude to those from whom one has learned.

The *Physics* begins with a general statement about how knowledge in any department is to be pursued. When objects have principles, causes, or elements, it is through these that knowledge will be attained. "For we do not think we know a thing until we are acquainted with its primary causes or first principles, and have carried our analysis as far as its elements." If this is generally true, it is also true of the science of nature.

> The natural way of doing this is to start from the things that are more knowable and clear to us and proceed toward those that are clearer and more knowable by nature; for the same things are not knowable relatively to us and knowable without qualification. So we must follow this method and advance from what is more obscure by nature, but clearer to us, toward what is more clear and more knowable by nature.[8]

What we first and most easily know is a step on the way to knowledge in a richer sense. We have here both a modest recognition of the limits of our mind as well as confidence in our ability to progress in knowledge. The ordering is not mere happenstance, as if some people first know oranges and others first know apples from which they go on to learn about cranberries. The quest of knowledge is awash in contingencies, but we are here being asked to recognize that some things are in the nature of our knowing easier for us to grasp and others more difficult even though more knowable in themselves. Unsurprisingly, given that this is an introductory methodological statement, a teacher is introducing his students to a vast area and laying out some guidelines that cannot at the moment be fully understood or appraised by his lis-

8. *Physics* I, 1, 184a16–21 (Trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye).

teners. But eventually the basis for speaking of things as more or less knowable by nature will be explained.

> Now what is to us plain and clear at first is rather confused masses, the elements and principles of which become known to us later by analysis. Thus we must advance from universals to particulars; for it is a whole that is more knowable to sense perception, and a universal is a kind of whole, comprehending many things within it, like parts. Much the same thing happens in the relation of the name to the formula. A name, for example, "Circle," means vaguely a sort of whole: its definition analyses this into particulars. Similarly a child begins by calling all men father, and all women mother, but later distinguishes each of them.[9]

Our knowledge begins with confused wholes that become better known insofar as we can analyze them into their principles and elements. The confused whole is then identified with the universal that comprehends many particulars. To know something universally is to know it in terms of shared and not particular properties. If I happen first to encounter oranges, I don't know right off or grasp what is peculiar to oranges as opposed to apples. I may of course use "orange" at first as I will come to use "fruit." That seems to be the point of the "father" and "mother" example. Aristotle didn't have access to our baby books where he might have read that you once called the milkman Daddy. It is clear that the contrast is not between rival objects of knowledge, universals or particulars; rather the contrast is between ways of knowing particulars, confused or less confusedly.

After these introductory remarks, Aristotle takes a look at what people who asked after nature came up with. These surveys of what his predecessors taught on a given matter are features of the Aristotelian treatises. They are sometimes dismissed as condescending catalogs of errors or forced attempts to turn his predecessors into lisping Aristotelians. These are not serious appraisals. The fundamental assumption of such surveys is that there is something to be learned even from answers that are open to obvious criticism. More pointedly, Aristotle will suggest an implicit agreement beneath the bewildering variety of accounts of nature he records. "Up to this point we have practically had most of the other writers on the subject with us, as I have said already; for all of them identify their elements, and what they call

9. Ibid., 184a22–184b10–13.

their principles with the contraries, giving no reason indeed for the theory, but constrained as it were by the truth itself."[10] He will conclude his survey by suggesting that "it is clear that the number of elements is neither one nor more than two or three: but whether two or three is, as I have said, a question of considerable difficulty."[11]

Against this background, Aristotle now gives his own account, "approaching the question with reference to becoming in its widest sense, for we shall be following the natural order of inquiry if we speak first of common characteristics, and then investigate the characteristics of special cases."[12] The task is to give an account of how "one thing comes to be from another thing" but the term "from which" can be expressed either simply or in a complex way. That is, we might express a given change in any of the following ways:

1. The man becomes musical.
2. The not-musical becomes musical.
3. The not-musical man becomes musical man.

The points of departure and arrival of the change in 1 and 2 is expressed simply, but both are expressed complexly in 3.

The example of little Vladimir learning the violin stands for any and every change in the world around us. We are not after the peculiarities of musical education, we need a concrete example if we are to say anything at all, but what we are going to say is of sweeping universality.

A second point. The three expressions of the change all exemplify the schema "A becomes B." But sometimes we say, "From A, B comes to be." For example, "From not-musical musical comes to be."

On this basis, a distinction becomes possible between the grammatical subject of the expression of a change and the subject of the change. If we should turn 1, 2, and 3 above into the second schema, we would get:

1* From man, musical comes to be.
2* From nonmusical, musical comes to be.
3* From the nonmusical man, the musical man comes to be.

10. Ibid., I, 5, 188bb27–30.
11. Ibid., I, 6, 189b28–29.
12. Ibid., I, 7, 189b30–33.

1* might make us uneasy because it suggests that musical comes to be only at the price of a man's ceasing to be. No such scruples attend 2* and 3*. If the grammatical subject of the expression of a change is that to which the change is attributed, the subject of the change as such is *that to which the change is attributed and which survives*. Clearly, then, not every grammatical subject expresses the subject of the change. And we see the basis for our uneasiness about 1*: as the subject of the change, man, little Vladimir, is still around when the skill of violin playing has been acquired. So there emerges the need to recognize a subject of a change and two opposites, nonmusical and musical. The suggestion is that the first thing that can be said—and of course the least—of any change, is that it involves a subject and two contrary states of the subject. "Things that come to be without qualification, come to be in different ways: by change of shape, as a statue; by addition, as things which grow; by taking away, as the Hermes from the stone; by putting together, as a house; by alteration, as things which turn in respect of their matter."[13] What a jumble, we might say, with natural and artificial changes mixed up in the same list. But that is just what we should expect at this point of the analysis. Nor should be overlook that it was the acquisition of a skill, an art, that served as the initial example, an example that blends the natural and the artificial. Only later will what is confused here, art and nature, be distinguished. The confusion—in the sense of Chapter 1-has yet to serve a most important function, the language that emerges from this analysis. So far we have subject, *hypokeimenon*, and opposites.[14] But this doctrine will eventually be conveyed by a vocabulary that is read off another very particular example.

Several of the examples in the jumbled list suggest the use of "form" for the state the subject achieves as the result of the change. And gradually there emerges a synonym for the subject of change, namely, "matter." The Greek term makes clear that its origin is another example, wood acquiring a different shape as the result of a change. When, by way of summary of this analy-

13. Ibid., I, 7, 190a5–9.

14. "Thus, from what has been said, it follows that whatever comes to be is always complex. There is, on the one hand, something that comes to be, and again something that becomes that—the latter in two senses, either the subject or the opposite. By the opposite I mean the unmusical, by the subject man; and similarly I call the absence of shape or form or order the opposite, and the bronze or stone or gold the subject" (190b10–16). He is referring here to the list made earlier that jumbled together natural and artificial changes.

sis, we are told that the minimal analysis of any change involves matter, form, and privation, we see how this generality is embedded in a quite accessible example. And just as "father" is used indiscriminately of all men, so wood and shape, matter and form, will be used of all changes.

The kinds of change that this analysis is meant to cover have been mentioned—change of place, alteration, quantitative increase—and clearly stuff and shape apply to alteration most obviously. It is a linguistic stretch to speak of the new position of the billiard ball as its shape or form, though less so when one speaks of the result of growth in a thing. But we should remember, in later uses, the provenance of the three terms matter, form, and privation. It is the wood that lacks a given shape that acquires it as the result of a change.

The Parmenidean paradox is resolved in the course of these analyses. How can something be said to come to be if it already is? What comes to be must do so either from what is or from what is not, and both are impossible. Being does not become being. Not-being cannot become being. In the first instance, there would seem to be no change; in the second, there is seemingly the assertion of a contradiction: nonbeing = being. The distinctions already made provide the solution. The problem arises because one is forgetful of the subject of the change and identifies being with the previous form and nonbeing with privation. But just as we distinguish what is attributed to the doctor qua doctor and what is attributed to him only incidentally, so too here. The doctor as doctor heals, but he does not make a hole in one as doctor, bur insofar as he is also a golfer. (The hole in one that a surgeon makes is not that which causes the surgeon to dance delightedly on the seventh green.) So too it is not the previous form that becomes the subsequent form, nor the privation that becomes its opposite. Rather it is the subject that from having the one form comes to have its opposite—water that from being cool becomes warm—or that from lacking the form comes to have it—that which was nonwarm water becomes warm water.

Another way of making this point is in terms of potentiality and actuality, but it is simply mentioned in passing. Of course it is crucial both here and subsequently.

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What can be said about all this is the following. A universal or generic analysis of becoming is made in terms of concrete examples that yield a vo-

cabulary that is at first abstract and then quite concrete. As the analysis proceeds it becomes clear that the vocabulary of matter, form, and privation is far from being as abstract as subject and opposites. It clearly is most at home in that kind of change called "alteration." But if this is true, then there is a kind of linguistic extension of the terminology right at the threshold of the study of nature. That is, there are analogies that sustain the common nomenclature. This is quite evident when the question arises as to whether the analysis can be applied to substances themselves, that is, to the coming into being of animals and plants. Is there an underlying nature or matter involved here as well? "The underlying nature can be known by analogy. For as bronze is to the statue, the wood to the bed, or the matter and the formless before receiving form to any thing that has form, so is the underlying nature or substance, that is, the 'this' or existent."[15]

"Analogy" here is related to but not identical with what Thomas means when he speaks of analogously common names. We are likely to think of Aristotle's discussion of metaphor in the *Poetics*, the fourth species of which is said to be according to analogy: *kat'analogian*. The shield is to Ares as the cup is to Dionysus, so we might transfer the symbol of one god to the other, and speak of "the cup of Ares" or "the shield of Dionysus." Here a linguistic transfer—*metapherein*—is based on a similarity of proportions or analogy, and we might perhaps say that cup is thereby being used analogously of the shield. But that is not quite what Thomas means by the analogous use of a term.

4. Analogy

An analogous term is a common or shared term that differs from the univocal term, on the one hand, and from the equivocal term, on the other. A term is said to be univocally common when it has the same account or definition in each of its uses. When Socrates and Alcibiades and Benny Hill have "man" predicated of them, the shared term has exactly the same account in each instance of use, say, rational animal. Such a term is said to be univo-

15. Ibid., 191a9–12.

cal. Sometimes a term is shared by several things but when we ask what it means, there seems to be no connection at all between what it means in the one instance and in another. If someone "lies" in the sense of tells an untruth and "lies" in the sense of taking a supine position, there is no connection between these meanings. Such a term is said to be equivocal. The analogous term is said to fall midway between these extremes. Things are said to be named analogously that have a common term that has a number of different but related meanings; furthermore, these meanings form an ordered set, so that one of them is primary or controlling. If the physician's skill, his *Merck Manual*, and his instruments are all called "medical," the term does not seem to be univocally common, nor is it equivocal. One of the meanings of 'medical' is primary, namely, the art or skill of the physician, and the manual and the instruments are called medical with reference to it.

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We have already seen that the terms "matter," "form," and "privation" have different but related meanings as applied to alteration, locomotion, and quantitative increase. "Form" means shape first of all and the change whereby a matter acquires a shape it previously did not have is the paradigmatic instance to which reference is made if we are to understand what is meant by speaking of added weight or a new location as "forms" of a subject. And, as the passage quoted above indicates, there is an extrapolation from such instances when the analysis of change is applied to substance as such. In alteration, locomotion, and growth, the change is attributed to a substance, but the substance does not come to be as such when its shape or location or size changes. But what would be the subject to which the change whereby a substance as such comes into being is attributed? It comes to be known on an analogy with the subject of incidental changes, that is, changes in which the substance changes but only in a certain respect, as to shape, place, or size.

5. Substantial Change

A further instance of such extension of the basic terms is found in the account of what knowing is. Knowing is understood and named on an analogy with physical change. In a physical change, the subject acquires a perfection of which previously it was deprived—that is, a perfection that it lacks

but that is appropriate to it. The result of a change is always a compound of the subject to which the change is attributed and the perfection or form achieved as the result of the change. Analyzing the coming into being of substance itself on an analogy with this, one requires a subject or matter, a form, and a privation. This extrapolation is not aimed at proving that substances come to be and cease to be. The enterprise is grounded in two unassailable truths: first, there are basic ontological units in the world around us, autonomous entities, things to which incidental changes are attributed. Second, not only do these basic entities, substances, change with respect to place, shape, and color, they themselves come into being. Not only are there changes from not-being-red to being-red, from not-being-in-Topeka to being-in-Topeka, and the like, but there are changes from not being a substance to being a substance, from not being a human being to being a human being. In short, that there is a plurality of substances and that substances themselves come to be and pass away is an assumption of the analysis. The question is how to understand and talk about such changes.

If they are changes, there must be a subject to which the change is attributed and which survives the change. If that subject were a substance, the change would be an incidental one, and we would have failed to explain what interests us. The subject of a substantial change must be a subject or matter that is not a substance, does not exist separately or autonomously, but exists only as a component of substances. Thus, when a substance comes to be, another substance ceases to be, its subject or matter becoming a component of the new substance. To indicate that the subject of substantial change must be one in a more fundamental and primary way, we call it "prime matter." The form involved in substantial change must be constitutive of the kind of thing that results from the change. Color, place, size make a substance to be such-and-such; the form acquired by prime matter in a substantial change makes a substance to be *tout court*, *simpliciter*. On this basis, the first true if sweeping statement to be made about physical objects, things that have come to be as the result of a change, is that they are compounds of matter and form. Their constitutive matter can be a component of any material substance—though according to lawlike development—so the matter of a physical thing is its possibility of not being, of being a constituent of something else. For it to be is for matter to be actuated by its substantial form.

6. Coming to Know

The first perfection of a thing is its nature or species, the kind of thing it is. "But because the specific being of one thing is distinct from the specific being of another thing, in any created thing having such perfection there will be lacking perfection insofar as the more perfect is found in other species, such that the perfection of a thing considered in itself is imperfect, as part of the total perfection of the universe that arises from the perfections of singular things gathered together."[16] An actual substance is the kind of thing it is and not another thing. When it has come to be, it is perfected, that is, the substantial change has reached its term, and the resultant substance is the kind of thing it is thanks to its form. Perfect of its kind, it does not have the perfections other things have, and thus from the point of view of the ordered whole that is the universe, a kind of substance, perfect though it be, can be said to be imperfect. This is a negation, not a privation, and the remedy for it is cognition.

> That there might be some remedy for this imperfection, another mode of perfection is found in created things, according as the perfection proper to one thing is found in another thing; and this is the perfection of the knower as knower, because something is known by the knower insofar as the known thing is in some way in the knower; that is why in *On the Soul* III the soul is said to be some manner all things, because it is designed to know them all.[17]

There are of course physical interactions among the things that make up the cosmos: one thing makes another move, for instance. But the movement of the moved is numerically different from the movement of the mover, so while we might say the effect is similar to the cause and has something like what the cause has, there remains the kind of ontological isolation men-

16. "Sed quia esse specificum unius rei est distinctum ab esse specifico alterius rei, ideo in qualibet re creata huiusmodi perfectioni habitae in unaquaque re, tantum deest de perfectione simpliciter, quantum perfectius in aliis speciebus invenitur; ut cuiuslibet rei perfectio in se consideratae sit imperfecta, veluti partes totius perfectionis universi, quae consurgit ex singularum rerum perfectionibus, invicem congregatis" (*Q. D. de veritate*, q. 2, a. 2).

17. "Unde ut huic imperfectioni aliquod rememdium esset, invenitur alius modus perfectionis in rebus creatis, secundum quod perfectio quae est propria unius rei, in altera re invenitur; et haec est perfectio cognoscentis in quantum est cognoscens, quia secundum hoc a cognoscente aliquid cognoscitur quod ipsum cognitum aliquo modo est apud cognoscentem; et ideo in III de anima dicitur, anima quodammodo omnia, quia nata est omnia cognoscere" (Ibid.).

tioned in the passages quoted. The remedy of knowledge enables a thing to have the other's perfection as the perfection of the other. This is the result of coming to know.

Once more, the task is not to prove that knowledge occurs but to understand it and speak of it in such a way that the understanding is expressed in understandable terms. What Aristotle and Thomas do is to think of coming to know on an analogy with coming to have an incidental or substantial form. The first perfection of the texts quoted, the *esse specificum*, refers to this. If coming to know is to be understood on an analogy with physical change, we are going to have to see the similarity as well as the dissimilarity between the two. There will be a subject or matter in privation of a form that it acquires as the result of the change. In perceiving red, the organ of sight is the subject and the form received is red, which is an account of actually seeing. But the differences between this and physical change must be stressed. When the eye receives red, we do not have another numerical instance of the quality as we do when a surface takes on a new color, when physical matter acquires a form. The acquisition of a form in cognition is different from the acquisition of a form by physical matter. This is the basis for speaking of cognition as immaterial; the negation is meant to stress the difference between the two kinds of becoming.

Intellectual knowledge will be understood and explained on an analogy with both physical change and perception. The text cited referred to *On the Soul*, Book III, where Aristotle says of the human soul that it is in a way everything, in the sense that its capacity for knowledge seems unlimited: "In this way it is possible that the perfection of the whole universe exists in one thing. Hence this is the ultimate perfection to which the soul can attain, according to philosophers, such that in it is described the whole order of the universe and its causes; in this is as well they located the ultimate end of man, which for us is the vision of God which, as Gregory puts it, 'what those who see all things do not see.'"[18]

It is because the forms and perfections of things are determined by matter

18. "Et secundum hunc modum possibile est ut in una re totius universi perfectio existat. Unde haec est ultima perfectio ad quam anima potest pervenire, secundum philosophos, ut in ea describatur totus ordo universi, et causarum eius; in quo etiam finem ultimum hominis posuerunt, qui secundum nos, erit in visione Dei, quia secundum Gregorium 'quid est quod non videant qui videntem omnia vident'" (Ibid.).

that knowledge of them requires that these forms be separated from matter. But this entails that what receives such a separated form be itself immaterial since if it were not the perfection received would be determined by matter and be simply another instance of the kind and physical change, not knowledge, would have occurred.[19]

These cursory reminders should suffice to establish how pervasive in natural philosophy is what Thomas calls "analogous naming." It has often been remarked that Thomas makes use of a small core vocabulary consisting of words that possess a number of different and related meanings and that the order among them exhibits the truth of the maxim that we name things as we know them. Although it would therefore be wrong to think that analogous terms are somehow confined to metaphysics, it is true that such names become even more important when we seek to extrapolate beyond the commensurate object of our intellect.

> It is connatural to us to know what exists only in individual matter because our soul, through which we know, is the form of some matter. The soul has two cognitive powers, one that is the act of a physical organ, to which it is connatural to know things as they are in individual matter: the senses know only singulars. The other cognitive power is the intellective, which is not the act of any physical organ. Hence thanks to intellect it is connatural to us to know natures, which indeed exist only in individual matter, but as they are abstracted from it by the consideration of intellect.[20]

Insistence that the natures of material things, physical objects, things that come to be as the result of a change, change constantly, and eventually cease to be are the connatural and commensurate object of the human mind does not lead to naturalism. That is, this insistence does not entail that the human

19. "Et quia formae et perfectiones rerum per materiam determinantur, inde est quod secundum hoc est aliqua res cognoscibilis secundum quod a materia separatur. Unde oportet quod etiam id in quo suscipitur talis rei perfectio, sit immateriale; si enim esse materiale, perfectio recepta esset in eo secundum aliquod esse determinatum; et ita non esse in eo secundum quod est cognoscibilis; scilicet prout, existens perfectio unius, est nata esse in altero" (Ibid.).

20. "Ea enim quae non habet esse nisi in materia individuali, cognoscere est nobis connaturale: eo quod anima nostra, per quam cognoscimus, est forma alicuius materiae. Quae tamen habet duas virtutes cognoscitivas. Unam quae est actus alicuius corporei organi. Et huic connaturale est cognoscere res secundum quod sunt in materia individuali: unde sensus non cognoscit nisi sngularia. Alia vero virtus cognoscitiva eius est intellectiva, qui non est actus alicuius organi corporalis. Unde per intellectum connaturale est nobis cognoscere naturas, quae quidem non habent esse nisi in materia individuali, sed secundum quod abstrahuntur ab ea per considerationem intellectus" (*ST* Ia, q. 12, a. 4).

mind is incapable of knowing anything other than material objects. But any further putative knowledge is going to have to be solidly anchored in knowledge of the connatural object of the human mind. If sensible things, when known, ground the conclusion that there must be things that exist separately from matter, knowledge of such things will be oblique, indirect, and dependent both epistemologically and linguistically on knowledge of sensible things. As for there being any science beyond physics, this has to be established. Metaphysics presupposes the nonsynonymy of being and material being. This is not self-evident; it must be established by way of proof, and until and unless it is, the science of sensible substances must seem the culminating concern of philosophy.

Eight ~ THE SCIENCE WE ARE SEEKING

We are seeking the principles and the causes of the things that are, and obviously of things qua being.

Metaphysics VI, 1

Reading the *Metaphysics* can give the impression of reading dispatches from the Lost Patrol. From the very outset of the work, wisdom is put before us as the ultimate aim of the pursuit of knowledge, one that can only be achieved after many other sciences and disciplines have been mastered. And the books of the *Metaphysics* represent that culminating endeavor. Yet when we read the work, we seem to be always about to do something, to be in quest of something that is problematical; indeed, we seem forever to be beginning again. But such tentative passages can be set alongside others in which certainty shines forth.

There is a science that investigates being as being and the attributes that belong to this in virtue of its own nature. Now this is not the same as any of the so-called special sciences; for none of these others deal generally with being as being. They cut off a part of being and investigate the attributes of this part—this is what the mathematical sciences for instance do. Now since we are seeking the first principles and the highest causes, clearly there must be some thing to which these belong in virtue of its own nature. . . . Therefore it is of being as being that we also must grasp the first causes.[1]

The passage makes clear that being as being is the subject of a science, that the causes and principles of being are sought, and that those principles and causes must be commensurate with the subject. A special science treats a restricted range of beings and will account for them in the light of principles

1. *Metaphysics* 4, 1, 1003a22-31. See Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "What Does It Mean to Study Being 'as being,'" *International Journal of Philosophy* (Fu Jen Catholic University), July 2004, pp. 63ff.

commensurate with them. But to understand a kind of being is not to understand being as such. How is this definitive passage to be understood?

1. *Ens primum cognitum*

Nothing is more familiar in Thomas Aquinas than the claim that being is the first thing grasped by our mind. *Ens est primum quod cadit in intellectu.* The principle of contradiction, that a thing cannot be and not be at the same time and in the same respect, presupposes that initial grasp of being. Far from representing a cognitive task, being is the inescapable object of our knowledge. No one can fail to know being. So why should there be a problem in setting up a science that would have being as being as its subject? The philosophy professor in the Second City company, announcing that his topic was the universe, went on: "Wat else ist der?" A fortiori, the same can be asked of being. Knowledge of it is the default position of the human mind, not an object of chancy quest.

When we add to this the fact that our knowledge is naturally said to begin with the universal and confused, and that nothing could be more universal than 'being,' which comprises all things within it, it is even more puzzling that a science of being as being should be presented as something that has to be established against the background of presumably already possessed special sciences.

If being as no one can fail to grasp it were sufficient to establish metaphysics, philosophy would be over before it began. Accordingly, a distinction must be made between *ens primum cognitum*, being as any and all grasp it, and *ens inquantum ens*, being as the subject of metaphysics.

The problem is posed at the outset of the *De ente et essentia*.[2] Thomas cites the Aristotelian remark that a small error in the beginning causes maximal confusion eventually, and therefore he commends getting a correct understanding of being and essence. The suggestion is that such knowledge lies at the beginning. Cajetan, in his commentary on this work, devotes many pages to the question of the cognitive primacy of being and, given the oc-

2. See the magisterial work of Joseph Bobik, *Aquinas on Being and Essence* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965).

casion of the work, discusses throughout Scotist alternatives and criticisms.[3] He provides this crisp and clear definition: *ens concretum quiditati sensibili est primum cognitum cognitione confusa actuali*. The predicable range of 'being' is maximal; it can be said of whatever is. But until and unless it is known that there is immaterial being, the predicable range of 'being' will be material things. John of St. Thomas, in the part of his *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus* devoted to natural philosophy discusses at length the universality of being as first grasped by our intellect.[4] Taking knowledge broadly to include sense knowledge, the first thing we know is some particular sensible thing. The mind's first concept is a grasp of the nature of the sensible thing in the vaguest and most comprehensive concept. Of course this is not to say that what the mind first knows is universality; the universality attaches to what is known, the quiddity of the sensible thing, known most imperfectly, as being.

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John of St. Thomas has an interesting discussion of intuitive knowledge in the course of his treatment of the *ens primum cognitum*:

> What is important is that this intuition bears on the sensible as being, not on being as being. In confirmation, I answer that it is true that some intuitive knowledge should precede, both in sense and in intellect, but it must be most imperfect in discerning one thing from another. For there are gradations in intuitive knowledge, some less perfect than others, as is clear when we see something from afar that is in no way clear to us in its particularity as to what it is: the intuitive knowledge is only that it is. Thus intellect in its first knowledge sees what is proposed to it as far off as a kind of intelligible though the object is present, and thus such intuitive knowledge attains only the existence of the object, the fact that it is, which is an imperfect intuition compatible with all kinds of confusion with respect to the quiddity and the distinction of predicates. (Ibid., 29a)[5]

3. Thomas de Vio Caietani, *In De ente et essentia D. Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. M.-H. Laurent, O.P. (Turin, 1934), 4–20. Also see Bobik, *Aquinas on Being and Essence*.

4. Edited by Beatus Reiser, O.S.B. (Turin, 1933), 20–33: "Utrum magis universale, atque adeo ipsum ens ut sic sit primo cognitum ab intellectu nostro."

5. "Ad confirmationem respondetur verum esse, quod aliqua intuitiva cognitio debet praecedere, tam in sensu quam in intellectu, sed tamen debet esse imperfectissima in discernendo unum ab alio. Nam in ipsa intuitiva cognitione etiam dantur gradus, et quaedam est imperfectior alia, ut patet, cum videmus a longe aliquid, quod nullo modo discernimus in particulari, quid sit, ubi solum datur intuitiva cognitio quoad an est. Sic intellectus in sua prima cognitione id, quod ipsi proponitur, videt quasi a longe in genere intelligibili, licet praesens sit obiectum,

This cannot of course mean that we grasp existence rather than existents, actuality as opposed to what is actual. Rather it means that, at this initial level, we grasp of something only that it exists, but the general concept formed is of being, that which exists, something existing.

2. Establishing the Possibility of a Science of *ens inquantum ens*

On many occasions Thomas makes the point that until and unless there is proof of the existence of immaterial being, to be and to be material will be synonymous. It is only a proof of the existence of immaterial being that opens the possibility of a science whose subject would be being as being. That is, being in all its amplitude is no longer simply a vague way of speaking of sensible things. Let us have the texts before us.

Having observed that those ancients who thought all being material held that the science of material being should consider the common principles, for example, the principle of contradiction, Thomas writes:

> But this is false, because there is a science above natural science; for nature itself, that is, the natural thing having within it a principle of motion, is but one kind of universal being. Not every being is of this kind, since it was proved in *Physics* VIII that there is an immobile being. This immobile being is higher and nobler than the mobile being that the naturalist considers. And because the consideration of the first being falls to this [higher] science, the consideration of common being falls to a science other than natural science, and it will also consider common principles of this kind. For physics is but a part of philosophy, and not the first, which considers common being and what pertain to being as such. (*In IV Metaphysic.*, lectio 5, n. 593)[6]

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et sic illa notitia intuitiva solum de obiecto attingit ipsum esse seu quoad an est, quod est esse intuitivam imperfecte et cum omnimoda confusione respectu quidditatis et discretionis praedicatorum."

6. "Hoc autem falsum est, quia adhuc est quaedam scientia superior naturali: ipsa enim natura, idest res naturalis habens in se principium motus, in se ipsa est unum aliquod genus entis universalis. Non enim omne ens est huiusmodi, cum probatum sit in octavo *Physicorum* esse aliquod ens immobile. Hoc autem ens immobile superius est et nobilius ente mobili, de quo considerat naturalis. Et quia ad illam scientiam pertinet consideratio entis primi, ideo ad aliam scientiam quam naturalem pertinet consideratio entis communis; et eius etiam erit considerare huiusmodi principia communia. Physica enim est quaedam pars philosophiae, sed non prima, quae considerat ens commune, et ea quae sunt entis inquantum huiusmodi."

He returns to this later in commenting on the same book: He gives a first reason, saying that against this should be mentioned what was said above in the same book, namely, that there is some "immobile nature," that is, the nature of the prime mover, as has been proved in *Physics* VIII. And this is said against those who ought to accept it because it was proved elsewhere. Therefore it is not true that all things are always in motion, and that nothing can truly be said of anything. (*In IV Metaphysic*., lect. 13, n. 690)[7]

There are some mobile things that are always moved, namely, the heavenly bodies above, and there is a mover, namely, the first, which is always immobile and exists unchanged, as is proved in *Physics* VIII. (*In IV Metaphsic*., lect. 17, n. 748)[8]

So too *In XII Metaphysic.*, lectio 6, n. 2517, reference is made to the proof of Book 8 of the *Physics* that there must be a first unmoved mover. There are as many parts of philosophy as there are parts of substance—meaning kinds of being.

That which is concerned with sensible substance is first in the order of teaching, because we ought to begin learning with what is more known to us, and he deals with this in Books VII and VIII of this work. That which is concerned with immaterial substance is prior in dignity and the aim of this science: this is treated in Book XII. *(In IV Metaphsic., lectio 2, n. 563)*[9]

If there were no substance beyond those that exist according to nature, with which physics is concerned, physics would be the first science. But if there is some immobile substance, this will be prior to natural substance, and consequently the philosophy considering such substance will be first philosophy. Because it is first it will be universal, and it will fall to it to consider being as being, and essence, and what belongs to being as being. The science of the first being is the same as the science of common being, as was said at the beginning of Book IV. (*In VI Metaphysic., lect. 1, n.* 1170)[10]

7. "Quintam ratonem ponit, dicens, quod contra haec dicenda sunt ea quae supra sunt dicta in hoc eodem libro; scilicet quod sit quaedam 'natura immobilis,' scilicet natura primi motoris, ut probatum est in octavo Physicorum. Et hoc est dicendum contra eos, et ipsi debent hoc credere, sicut alibi probatum est. Et ideo non est verum, quod omnia semper in motu, et quod nihil vere de aliquo possit dici."

8. "Sunt enim quaedam mobilia, quae semper moventur; scilicet corpora super caelestia; et est quoddam movens, scilicet primum, quod semper est immobile, et semper eodo modo se habet, ut probatum est octavo Physicorum."

9. "Illa tamen quae est de substantia sensibili est prima ordine doctrinae, quia a notioribus nobis oportet incipere disciplinam; et de hac determinatur in septimo et octavo huius. Illa vero, quae est de substantia immateriali est prior dignitate et intentione huius scientiae, de qua traditur in duodecimo huius."

10. ". . . si non est aliqua alia substantia praeter eas quae consistunt secundum naturam, de quibus est physica, physica erit prima scientia. Sed, si est aliqua substantia immobilis, ista erit

And, of course, in Book IV, the science of being as being is the science of the first being, not as its subject matter, but as the cause of its subject, being as being.

> But among the speculative sciences it is clear that each of the mathematical sciences deals with one determinate kind: but a universal science is concerned commonly with all, hence none of the mathematical sciences is common to all beings. As for natural science, it is obvious that if natural substances that are sensible and mobile were the first among beings, natural science would have to be first among the sciences, because sciences are ranked according to their subjects, as has been said.—But if there is another nature and substance beyond natural substances, separable and immobile, there must be another science of such being higher than natural science. And because it is first it will be universal. For it is the same science that is concerned with the first beings and which is universal. For first beings are principles of the others, as causing them. (*In XI Metaphysic.*, lectio 7, n. 2267)[11]

See too *In III Metaphysic.*, lect. 6, n. 398.

Any one of these passages would suffice to make the point but their cumulative effect shows it to be inescapable that, for St. Thomas, metaphysics as a science of being as being, where being has more reach than sensible being, depends upon knowing that there are immaterial beings. Since such knowledge does not fall within the realm of the self-evident, it must be achieved by argument. The arguments must take place within a science, and since metaphysics is not yet a possibility, such proofs are found in natural philosophy. The texts cited point again and again to the proof of the prime mover at

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prior substantia naturali, et per consequens philosophia considerans huiusmodi substantiam, erit philosophia prima. Et quia est prima, ideo erit universalis, et erit eius speculari de ente inquantum est ens, et de eo quod quid est, et de his quae sunt entis inquantum est ens; eadem enim est scientia primi entis et entis communis, ut in principio quarti habitum est."

11. "Sed inter speculativas scientias, manifestum est, quod quaelibet mathematicarum scientiarum est circa unum aliquod genus determinatum: universalis autem scientia communiter de omnibus est: unde nulla mathematicarum scientiarum est communis omnium entium.—Sed de naturali manifestum est, quia si naturales substantiae, quae sunt substantiae sensibiles et mobiles, sunt primae inter entis, oportet quod naturalis scientia sit prima inter scientias; quia secundum ordinem subiectorum est ordo scientiarum, ut iam dictum est.—Si autem est alia natura et substantia praeter substantias naturales, quae sit separabilis et immobilis, necesse est alteram scientiam ipsius esse, quae sit prior naturali. Et ex eo quod est prima, oportet quod sit universalis. Eadem enim est scientia quae est de primis entibus, et quae est universalis. Nam prima entia sunt principia aliorum [in causando]."

the end of the *Physics*.[12] Nonetheless, so solid and thorough a student of St. Thomas as John Wippel rejects the point of these texts.

3. John Wippel

He has a number of reasons. First, prior to taking up these texts, he undertakes an analysis of Thomas's exposition of the *De trinitate* of Boethius, and draws the following conclusion: "In no way does this text imply that prior knowledge of positively immaterial being is presupposed for the metaphysician to discover being as being, the subject of metaphysics."[13] He thinks that an examination of the *proemium* to the commentary on the *Metaphysics* reenforces this view and grounds a distinction between that prefatory discussion and the commentary itself. In the former, "Thomas is speaking in his own name," whereas when we read the commentary "we must constantly ask ourselves whether in explaining the Stagirite's thought, Thomas is also presenting his own."[14] It's not clear how that distinction could be made within the commentary itself, but Wippel feels that the *proemium* provides an alternative to the commentary because Thomas is writing *in propria persona*, and since the *proemium* is thought to be inconsistent with the passages we have cited, he can safely conclude that Thomas was simply giving us the best reading of the text he is commenting on when he spoke of the necessity of a proof that to be and to be material are not identical. That is, he is giving here Aristotle's view and not his own.

I think this is wrong. I find no alternative to the commentary texts in either the exposition of Boethius or in the *proemium* to the commentary. These are texts that will shortly be examined, but there is no need to wait for that to see the unacceptability of Wippel's reading. So far as the Boethian exposition goes, Wippel notes the distinction made between two sorts of object that fall to the concern of the metaphysician whose discipline had been

12. These texts could be supplemented by others that point to the proof of the human soul's continued existence after death, that is, to an immaterially and separately existing soul. See, e.g., *In I Metaphysic.*, lectio 12, n. 181. This argument depends on the analysis of intellection and is particularly important for Book Lambda of the *Metaphysics*.

13. John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C., 2000), 53.

14. Ibid.

said to be characterized by objects that are defined without matter and motion. But things are separable from matter and motion in either of two ways: either because they sometimes exist materially and sometimes not, or because they never exist in matter.[15] Wippel calls the former "negatively or neutrally immaterial" and he thinks the mental activity called *separatio* suffices "to consider substance as such rather than as quantified (or as material, we may add), so too it is through separation that one may consider being as such or as being rather than as quantified or as material. In sum, it is through separation that one discovers being as being, the subject of metaphysics."[16] Given this interpretation, which he professes to find reenforced by the *proemium* to the *Metaphysics*, Wippel feels justified in setting aside the texts we have put before the reader from the commentary. So how is Wippel wrong?

The things he calls negatively or neutrally immaterial are exemplified by being, substance, act ,and potency. Of these we are told that they are sometimes found in matter and sometimes not. That is, they are separable from matter. Wippel apparently takes *separatio* to be a mental act whereby we just recognize that being is sometimes immaterial, that substance is sometimes immaterial, and so on. He even cites the commentary on the *Metaphysics* for what he takes to be confirmation of this.[17] But of course unless one knows there is at least one immaterial being or one immaterial substance, one has no basis for saying that some substances exist apart from matter and motion. Does Wippel think that simply ignoring the features of sensible being puts one into contact with immaterial being? Or does he think the conceptual possibility—the dialectical or logical possibility—suffices to establish the subject of the science we are seeking?

Far from providing an alternative to the texts in the commentary, these "personal" passages teach the same thing.[18] Until we know that being is not

15. See *In Boethii de trinitate*, q. 5, art. 4 (ed. Wyser): "Utraque autem est de his quae sunt separata a materia et motu secundum esse, sed diversimode, secndum quod dupliciter potest esse aliquid a materia et motu separatum secundum esse: uno modo sic quod de ratione ipsius rei, quae separata dicitur, sit quod nullo modo in materia et motu esse possit, sicut Deus et angeli dicuntur a materia et motu separari; alio modo sic, quod non sit de ratione eius, quod sit in materia et motu, sed possit esse sine materia et motu, quamvis quandoque inveniatur in materia et motu, et sic ens et substantia et potentia et actus sunt separata a materia et motu. . . ."

16. Wippel, *Thought*, 47.

17. Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 49, n. 81.

18. In the very text from the *De trinitate* commentary on which Wippel relies, there is an

necessarily material by proving that something immaterial exists, we don't know it and there is no possibility of another science, one whose subject is being as being, that will differ from already existing sciences. If physics were first philosophy it would fall to it to consider the most common principles because their community would not extend beyond sensible things.

This may seem a somewhat curt treatment of an interpretation that is among the most thorough and instructive on the matter before us. Only when we have provided our own readings of key passages and come to an understanding of the structure and method of metaphysics will we be able to grasp the full import of the distinction between the two kinds of thing defined without matter and motion. It is of course true that in the *Metaphysics* sensible things are studied insofar as they are beings and substances and one of the passages cited above tells us where to look for this consideration: "Illa tamen quae est de substantia sensibili est prima ordine doctrinae, quia a notioribus nobis oportet incipere disciplinam; et de hac determinatur in septimo et octavo huius." The order of learning appropriate to human beings is not left at the threshold of metaphysics, but governs its internal development. Why, we must ask, should sensible substances be analyzed in metaphysics?

4. Distinguishing Speculative Sciences

As a very young man, Thomas commented on two works of Boethius, the so-called *De hebdomadibus* and the theological tractate on the Trinity. The first is complete, the second breaks off in the second chapter and at a point where one would have been most interested to know what Thomas would say next. What he did comment on at great length was the distinction of sciences with which Boethius began his second chapter:

> Speculative Science may be divided into three kinds: Physics, Mathematics, and Theology. Physics deals with motion and is not abstract or separable; for it is concerned with the forms of bodies together with their constituent matter, which forms cannot be separated in reality from their bodies. . . . Mathematics does not deal with motion and is not abstract, for it investigates forms of bodies apart from matter, and there-

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explicit reiteration of the dependence of metaphysics on natural science. ". . . quae alio nomine dicitur metaphysica, id est trans physicam, quia post physicam discenda occurrit nobis, quibus ex sensibilibus oportet in insensibilia devenire" (Wyser, 26, 37–39).

fore apart from motion, which forms, however, being connected with matter cannot be really separated from bodies. Theology does not deal with motion and is not abstract, for it investigates forms of bodies apart from matter, and therefore apart from motion.[19]

Thomas's unpacking of this passage is of the utmost importance and interest.[20]

Thomas's fifth question is devoted to distinguishing the speculative sciences and comprises four articles, in the first of which he establishes the criteria for distinguishing sciences, and then takes up seriatim the philosophy of nature, mathematics, and divine science. The third article has received the most discussion, not because it concerns mathematics, but because in speaking of the abstraction that characterizes mathematics as well as the abstraction operative in natural philosophy, Thomas introduces the activity of separation as distinctive of metaphysics. Divine science is only later subdivided into the theology of the philosophers and the theology of Sacred Scripture.[21] As has been indicated, the discussions occasioned by the text are preceded by a careful *expositio* of the Boethian text itself. After giving the three speculative sciences, Boethius assigns a different mode of procedure to each, something Thomas will discuss in his sixth question. Aristotle is invoked as giving as the mark of the wise man a respect for the peculiar way each discipline proceeds. Thomas stresses that the wider discussion is aimed at divine science, what it

19. *Boethius "The Theological Tractates" with "The Consolation of Philosophy"* (London: Rand & Tester, 1978), 9. See my *Boethius and Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990), Chapter 4, "Tres speculativae partes."

20. A partial edition of the commentary was published by Paul Wyser, O.P., in 1948: *Thomas von Aquin In librum Boethii de trinitate quaestiones quinta et sexta* (Fribourg). Wyster gives us only the exposition of the opening of Boethius's Chapter 2. A decade or so later, a complete edition was published. See Bruno Decker, ed., *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Expositio super librum Boethii de trinite* (Leiden, 1959). In 1992, volume 50 of the Leonine edition of the *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia* appeared, giving us the exposition of the *De hebdomadibus* and the *De trinitate*. Both Decker and the Leonine, edited by Pierre-M. J. Gils, give us the *expositio* of the text of Boethius, that is, a close reading of the text, and the questions Thomas took up as a result of the text. Wyser had given only Thomas's *quaestiones*.

21. Just how Boethius would have dealt with his apparent suggestion that the divine science he contrasts with natural philosophy and mathematics could handle the Christian mystery of the Trinity of persons in God is unclear. In his *expositio* Thomas adds to the Boethian phrase "Nam cum tres sint partes speculativae" an explanatory phrase of his own, "scilicet philosophiae."

is and its proper mode of procedure. In his *expositio* Thomas emphasizes the descriptive phrases Boethius gives of each of the sciences. Thus, physics is said to deal "with motion and is not abstract or separable," whereas mathematics "does not deal with motion and is not abstract, for it investigates forms of bodies apart from matter, and therefore apart from motion." As for divine science, it "does not deal with motion and is not abstract, for it investigates forms of bodies apart from matter, and therefore apart from motion."[22]

5. The Criteria

In the *expositio* Thomas had pointed out that the threefold division given by Boethius contrasts the speculative with the active or practical. So too Article 1 opens with an invocation of the distinction between the theoretical or speculative and the practical. The *locus classicus* is *On the Soul* III, 10.[23] The theoretical use of the mind has truth as its goal whereas when mind is used practically the perfection of some activity other than mere thinking is the aim. Not just anything can be thought about practically but only those things we can do or make: call them operable or do-able things, *operabilia*. Things not so subject to our power of making or doing are the fitting objects of speculation. Call these *speculabilia*. If these are the appropriate objects of theoretical thinking, formal differences among speculable objects will generate formally different sciences. That is the fundamental assumption of Article 1. Of course when habits or powers are distinguished by their objects, this must be by essential and not incidental characteristics. Sight is not going to be distinguished on the basis of whether it is an animal or a star that is seen, but on the basis of color. "The speculable that is the object of the speculative power has one characteristic due to the intellectual power and another due to

22. The Boethian text as found in Loeb reads "*theologica*, sine motu abstracta atque separabilis," but the text Thomas explicates in his *expositio* reads "abstracta atque inseparablis." How does he explain this inseparabillity? It would seem to suggest that the divine substance does not exist separately from matter and motion. Contrasting them with mathematicals that are separable as considered by mind, Thomas goes on: "res divinae inseparabiles, quia nihil est separabile nisi quod est coniunctum. Unde res divinae non sunt secundum considerationem separabiles a materia, sed secundum esse abstractae." See Decker ed., 160, ll. 9–14.

23. "Both of these then are capable of originating local movement, thought, and appetite: thought, that is, which calculates means to an end, that is, practical thought (it differs from speculative thought in the character of its end) . . ." (433213-15).

the habit of science by which intellect is perfected."[24] Both the power and its habit will introduce requirements for something's being an object of theoretical reason. Intellectual activity being immaterial, its object must be commensurate with it and thus immaterial; the habit of science requires that the object of theoretical thinking be necessary, as has been established in the *Posterior Analytics*.[25] The necessary is that which cannot be otherwise, that is, is immobile, so the two requirements of the speculable object can be expressed in terms of separation from matter and motion *(separatio a materia et motu)* and thus it is according to distance from matter and motion that the speculative sciences are distinguished: *secundum ordinem remotionis a materia et motu scientiae speculativae distinguuntur*."[26]

6. Application of the Criteria

These properties of the speculable object provide the criteria for distinguishing theoretical sciences on a formal basis. Insofar as the objects of theoretical thinking exhibit different instances of removal or distance from matter and motion, to that degree they will be the subjects of different theoretical sciences.

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"Quaedam ergo speculabilium sunt, quae dependent a materia secundum esse, quia non nisi in materia esse possunt": "Some of the things we think about depend on matter in order to exist since they can only exist in matter." This is so obvious that it seems unworthy of recall, but Thomas's point is that such things can be considered in two ways.

Because some things depend on matter both in order to be and to be understood, for example, those things into whose definition sensible matter enters and that cannot

24. "Speculabili autem, quod est obiectum speculativae potentiae, aliquid competit ex parte intellectivae potentiae et aliquid ex parte habitus scientiae, quo intellectus perficitur."

25. The two criteria of the speculabile object, immateriality and necessity, are based on truths that have been argued for and established elsewhere. But such an overview of the sciences as Thomas undertakes here is by its nature sapiential, and can and must rely on the totality of acquired knowledge. Until one has examined the relevant arguments and seen their cogency, one can only take these claims on trust. Hence the adage *oportet addiscentem credere*. This is a practical expedient, not a terminal desideratum, of course.

26. Wyser ed., 26, ll. 21–22; Decker ed., 165, ll. 14–15; Leonine ed., 138, ll. 138–140.

therefore be understood without sensible matter, as flesh and bones are put into the definition of man: physics or natural science is concerned with such things. (Wyser ed., 26, ll. 24–28; Decker ed., 165, ll. 18–20; Leonine ed., ll. 141–49)[27]

Material things require definitions that mention their dependence on matter in order to exist. What they are can only be adequately expressed if their material component is acknowledged. Any account of a material thing that ignores or goes light on its material component will be characterized as a "logical" or "dialectical"—abstract or formal—definition. For example, were one to define anger as "a desire for revenge," this, while true, does not convey fully what the emotion of anger is. Contrasted with this "dialectical" definition is a "natural" one that expresses the totality of what is being defined: anger is a desire for revenge accompanied by a rushing of the blood. The definitions appropriate to natural philosophy, the study of the things that come to be as the result of a change, will express their matter as well as their form.

For all that, the definitions of mathematics are not dialectical in the sense just mentioned, although they can be called formal.

But there are some things that, although they depend on matter in order to be, do not so depend as they are understood, because sensible matter is not put into their definitions, for example, the line and number, and mathematics is concerned with these. (Wyser ed., 26, ll. 29-31; Decker ed., 165, ll. 21-24; Leonine ed., 138, ll. 149-54)[28]

Before looking at the ground for mathematical definitions in natural things, let us have before us Thomas's account of a third order of speculable objects:

But there are some speculable objects that do not depend on matter in order to be, because they can exist without matter, whether they are never in matter, such as God and the angels, or in some things are in matter and in some not, such as substance, quality, being, potency, act, one and many, and the like, with all of which theology, that is divine science, is concerned, God being the chief among the things it knows;

27. "Quia quaedam dependent a materia secundum esse et intellectum, sicut illa in quorum definitione ponitur materia sensibilis; unde sine materia sensibili intelligi non possunt, ut in definitione hominis oportet accipere carnem et ossa, et de his est physica sive scientia naturalis."

28. "Quaedam vero sunt quae quamvis dependeant a materia secundum esse, non tamem secundum intellectum, quia in eorum definitionibus non ponitur materia sensibilis, sicut linea et numerus, et de his est mathematica."

it is also called metaphysics, that is, beyond physics, because we learn it after physics, since it is from sensible things that we are led to the nonsensible. (Wyser ed., 26, ll. 31–39; Decker ed., 165, ll. 24–166.4; Leonine ed., ll. 154–65)[29]

There are, then, three formally distinct speculative or theoretical sciences because there are three sorts of object differentiated according to what pertains *per se* to the speculable object, removal from matter and motion. The least problematical science, that of nature, is in a sense most problematical on the basis of the application of these criteria. How can the object of material and mobile being be removed or abstracted from matter and motion without radical distortion? Is the abstract consideration of natural things their inevitable falsification?[30] Natural things are considered in abstraction from their singular but not from their essential notes. It is of the essence of giraffe, say, to be defined in such a way that it is clear that it is a material and changeable thing, but the peculiarities of this giraffe as opposed to that are not of the essence of giraffe. If they were, to be one giraffe would be to be them all: giraffe would be essentially singular. But there are many giraffes, each of which is a giraffe and each of which is a giraffe distinct from the others. The only giraffes that exist are singular ones. To consider a giraffe in abstraction from what is required in order for it to exist—to be this one or that one—would thus be considering the giraffe otherwise than as it exists. But to consider something otherwise than it is would seem to be the very definition of a falsifying consideration.

There are, however, two senses of "considering something otherwise than as it is." A first sense is to consider the thing without something essential to it, the second sense is to consider what is essential to it without considering what is peculiar to this instance or that. In the first sense, falsehood consists of omitting what is essential to it, but this is not the case when, as considered, singular features are left out of account. The abstract consideration of sensible singulars is due to our way of knowing them. To assume that things exist as we

29. "Quaedam vero speculabilia sunt, quae non dependent a materia secundum esse, quia sine materia esse possunt, sive nunquam sint in materia, sicut Deus et angelus, sive in quibusdam sint in materia et in quibusdam non, ut substantia, qualitas, ens, potentia, actus, unum et multa, et huiusmodi, de quibus omnibus est theologia, id est scientia divina, quia praecipuum in ea cognitorum est Deus, quae alio nomine dicitur metaphysica, id est trans physicam, quia post physicam discenda occurit nobis, quibus ex sensibilibus oportet in insensibilia devenire."

30. *Summa theologiae* Ia, q. 85, a. 1, ad 1.

consider them leads, as Thomas points out (q. 5, a. 2), to the theory of Platonic Forms. We consider singulars universally, that is, in a way otherwise than as they exist, but we do not predicate of singulars our mode of knowing them.

In the *De ente et essentia*, another early work, Thomas gives a succinct statement of his resolution of the Problem of Universals. His solution can be considered by comparing the following three statements:

1. Man is rational.
2. Man is a species.
3. Man is seated.

All three are true statements, but they are true in different ways and the difference is that between the *per se* and the incidental. Statement 3 is true if some individual man is seated in his Barcalounger. Say it is Socrates in an uncharacteristic moment. This might prompt us to formulate the following argument.

Man is seated.
Alcibiades is a man.
Alcibiades is seated.

It may happen that Alcibiades too is seated, but then it just happens that Socrates is seated as well. To be a man and to be seated are not linked in such a way that when Socrates and Alcibiades rise from their chairs they cease to be men. It happens that an individual who is a man is also seated, but the link between subject and predicate is incidental or *per accidens*. That is why the argument is fallacious.

Something similar happens when we formulate such an argument on the basis of Statement 2.

Man is a species.
Socrates is a man.
Socrates is a species.

Now, to be a species is to be predicated of many individuals. But "Socrates" is the proper name of the husband of Xanthippe. They may name their son Socrates, the Athens phone book may contain a dozen other individuals named Socrates, but sharing the same proper name is not to have anything

else in common. A kind of nominalism has its proper home in proper names. None of the individuals named "Socrates" is predicated of a number of individuals. To be a species, to be this kind of universal, is something that is attached to the nature as it is known and named by us. The community of predication involved in "Socrates is a man" and "Alcibiades is a man" and "Socrates Jr. is a man" expresses something essential. That is why we can form a nonfallacious argument based on Statement 1.

Man is rational.
Socrates is a man.
Socrates is rational.

It is because there is an essential or *per se* link between being a man and being rational that anything that is a man is also rational. Statement 2 expresses something that is true of the nature as it is known by us, Statement 3 expresses something that happens to be true of the nature because some individual instance of it is seated. However different Statements 2 and 3 may be, they are as one in this: that they link things in a proposition that is only incidentally true.

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On this basis, Thomas will say that natural science is first and principally concerned with the universal grasp of natures and secondarily, by way of reflection, with the singular things in which the nature universally considered is found. This raises an enormous difficulty for Thomistic realism. If natural science is principally concerned with universal notions, and universality is a feature of natures as they are known by us, it would seem to follow that the first and chief concern of natural sciences is *things as they are known by us*. The application of these universals to singulars is a further and secondary concern. But a science that concentrates on things as we know them would be by definition a science not concerned with things as they exist. Rather, it is our representations of things, our concepts, that are primary.

This quasi-Kantian Thomas does not exist. When natural science is said to be chiefly concerned with *rationibus universalibus* this is not to be understood as meaning that the deliverances of natural science are like Statement 2 above. What the mind grasps of singular individuals is the means of knowing what they are, the nature that as existents they possess. The difference be-

tween Statement 1 and Statement 2 above is that the latter focuses on something incidental to the nature *as we know it*, that is, abstractly and universally. But Statement 1 expresses a truth about the nature of singular instances of that kind. That is why we can formulate the third argument above. It is because rationality is essential to the nature Socrates has that it is truly found in him and in other individuals of that nature. In knowing sensible singulars universally and abstractly, we do not predicate of them the universality and abstraction that is a feature of our knowledge of them. But universality attaches to the nature known that is an expression of the nature found in existent things. Thus, when Thomas says that natural science is primarily concerned with universal notions, he is speaking of the content of those notions rather than the universality incidentally true of them as known. The conceptual content is a direct means of knowing natures as they exist.

This does not entail that the natures or essences of things are easy to grasp. Indeed, in several oft-quoted passages Thomas is quite agnostic about our ability to grasp the essence of any natural kind. What effect does this have on what has just been said? The agnosticism has to do with species, with the specific essence. Before the nature of Socrates, human nature, can be grasped, there is a long pursuit of it through a cascade of progressively less generic grasps. To know that Socrates is a substance, that he is a living substance, that he is an animal, that is, endowed with senses, is to know something of what he is. The contents to which these modes of universality and predicability attach are true of things as they exist. The whole effort of natural science as Thomas understands it, guided by Aristotle, is toward the eventual grasp of specific natural kinds. But even if this goal were never perfectly achieved, the process involves at least an imperfect grasp of essence and is thus essential knowledge. The genus is defined as that which is common to many specifically different things, but the generic grasp is a grasp, however imperfect, of the essence. This is said to be our natural way of achieving knowledge and it is productive of a Porphyrean tree of subalternated genera. But the levels of abstraction and universality do not pick out a real hierarchy of things, as if there were substances that are neither living nor nonliving and living things that are neither plants nor animals. However vague the grasp, we can distinguish between the conceptual content and the universality, greater or less, that incidentally attaches to it as known by us.

7. *Abstractio* and *Separatio*

Few passages in the commentary on the *De trinitate* have been more discussed than that found in Question 5, Article 3 where Thomas distinguishes abstraction from separation. Many commentators have professed to find in this discussion proof positive of the central role that *esse* plays in metaphysics as understood by St. Thomas.[31] Whether or not it has this significance, it is a text of the greatest importance for understanding Thomas's thought.

The plan of Question 5 of the commentary on the *De trinitate* is straightforward. Having established the formal criteria for distinguishing speculable objects in Article 1, Thomas lays out the threefold distinction of such objects insofar as they give rise to formally different speculative sciences. He then discusses the three speculative sciences *seriatim*, natural science in Article 2, mathematics in Article 3, and divine science or theology in Article 4. Mathematics poses peculiar problems of its own. Where are the lines and angles and circles, where are the numbers, studied by the mathematician? There may seem at least as much incentive to regard mathematicals as a realm apart as to hold that man and horse are separate forms. Euclid alone may have looked on beauty bare, in the words of the poet, but no one has encountered his triangles and circles in the world of sensible nature. If we are ever likely to speak of abstract considerations or abstract entities, it is in the case of mathematics. Thomas goes to great lengths to show that the considerations of mathematics are not falsifications. This intricate discussion repays careful analysis.

The guiding question of the discussion makes clear that Thomas regards mathematicals as abstracted from sensible objects. *Utrum mathematica consideratio sit sine motu et materia de his quae sunt in materia.* The essential preliminary distinction is drawn from Aristotle (III *De anima*, 6, 430a26 and b26 ff.). Our mind engages in a twofold activity or operation, one by which it grasps of things what they are, and another by which it composes and divides, forming affirmative and negative judgments. These two activities reflect what is found in reality, since the first operation looks to the very nature of the thing whereby the thing understood has its ontological status, whether it be something complete, a certain whole, or a part or accident. The second

31. See my *Boethius and Aquinas*, 148ff.

operation looks to the very existence of the thing, something that in composite things results from the coming together of its principles, or in simple substances is concomitant with its nature.

Since true understanding consists in conformity with reality, it is clear that we cannot truly abstract that which is conjoined in reality since such abstraction would signify that they are really separate. For example, were I to abstract man from white and say "Man is not white," I signify that they are separate in reality. If they are not in reality separate, my understanding would be false. Thus by the second operation of the mind I can truly abstract only what is really separate, as when I say "Man is not an ass."

But I can by means of the first operation of mind abstract what is not really separate, though not always. Things are intelligible to the degree that they are actual and that is why the quiddity or nature of a thing is understood (1) insofar as it is some act, for example, simple substances; (2) according to what is their act, as composed substances are understood through their forms; (3) or in terms of something that functions as act, as prime matter is understood in relation to form and the vacuum with reference to the absence of a located thing. Its act is that from which any nature takes its account or definition *(ratio)*. Therefore, when that which constitutes the definition of a thing, thanks to which the whole nature is understood, has an order to or dependence on something else, the nature cannot be understood without that other thing, and this whether it be connected to it as a part is to its whole—the foot cannot be understood without reference to the animal—or as form to matter, part to part, or accident to subject—as "snub" cannot be understood without reference to "nose"—or even when the things are really separate, as the father as father cannot be understood without reference to the child.

If, on the other hand, a thing does not depend on another with respect to what constitutes its definition, mind can abstract it from that other, such that it is understood without it. This is so not only when things are really separate, as are a man and a rock, but even when they are really conjoined, whether as part and whole—as the letter can be understood apart from the syllable, but not vice versa, and animal without foot, but not vice versa—or even as conjoined as form to matter, or accident to subject, as whiteness can be understood without man and vice versa.

To summarize, the intellect distinguishes *(distinguit)* one thing from an-

other according to its different operations. By its activity of composing and dividing, it distinguishes one thing from another when it understands that the one is not in the other. By the operation by which it understands what a thing is, intellect distinguishes one thing from another when it understands what this is without understanding something else, neither that it is found with it or is separate from it. This distinguishing *(distinctio)* is not properly called separation *(separatio)* but only that performed by the second operation. It is rather properly and rightly called abstraction *(abstractio)*—but only when the thing considered without another is really conjoined with it.

Thomas is suggesting, accordingly, that the first and proper understanding of 'abstraction' is considering apart that which does not exist apart. 'Separation' in the proper sense consists in a judgment that one thing exists separately from another. These restricted senses of the two terms have been held in abeyance to this point. At the outset of Article 1, when he was introducing the criteria that formally characterize the speculable, Thomas used *separatio*, *remotio*, *distinctio* synonymously (Wyser ed., 26, ll. 20–22). Here in Article 3, drawing attention to the analogous character of 'abstraction' and 'separation' is essential to getting clear about mathematics and to avoiding the suggestion that the nature of mathematical objects commits one to the view that they exist separately from matter and motion.

The proper and primary sense of 'abstraction' applies only to considering something apart from something else with which it exists but without mention of the latter, something that is justified by the two modes of conjunction already introduced, that of part and whole, and form and matter. There are two kinds of abstraction in this proper sense of the term, one by which a form is abstracted from matter, the other by which a whole is abstracted from its part.

A form can be abstracted from matter only if its account or definition does not depend upon that matter. Mind cannot abstract a form from the matter if the form is essentially dependent for its understanding on that matter. Accidents relate to substance as form to matter but they cannot be defined without substance and thus accident cannot be separated (*separari;* Wyser ed., 39, l. 27) from substance. But accidents inhere in substance in an ordered way, first quantity, then quality, then passion, and then motion. That is why quantity can be understood in substance before sensible qualities are

understood, the qualities thanks to which substance is called sensible matter: quantity does not depend for its essential understanding on sensible matter, but only on intelligible matter, that is, substance. Substance when its accidents are removed is comprehensible by intellect alone; our sense powers do not attain to substance as such. Mathematics is concerned with abstract things in this sense, since it considers quantities and their properties, such as figures and the like.

A whole can be abstracted from some of its parts. There are parts on which the understanding of the whole depends when what the whole is results from the coming together of those parts—for example, the syllable cannot be understand apart from letters. These parts are called *partes speciei et formae*, since without them the whole cannot be understood and they enter into its definition. Other parts are only incidentally related to the whole, as semicircle to circle, for it is incidental to the circle that it be divided into equal or unequal parts. But it is not incidental to the triangle that it have three sides since the triangle depends on them in order to be a triangle. Similarly, a man is composed of a rational soul and a body composed of elements and he cannot be understood without such parts; they enter into his definition and thus are parts of the species or form. Man can be understood without mention of toes and hands, however, and the essential understanding of him does not include them. Such parts are called parts of matter (*partes materiae;* Wyser ed., 40, l. 12) just because they are not put in the definition of the whole, but rather the reverse. All signate or individual parts are like this—this body, these bones. Thomas adds that these are indeed *partes essentiae Socratis et Platonis* (Wyser ed., 40, l. 15) but not of man as man. Doubtless this should be understood in terms of what is incidentally true of the essence, not that there are individual essences. Such an abstraction of whole from parts is exemplified in the abstraction of the universal from the particular.

Thomas then summarizes what he has said about the two kinds of abstraction, that of form from matter and that of whole from part. The so-called parts of matter cannot be abstracted because the definition of the whole applies to them. But what of the parts that can be understood apart from their whole? Parts that can exist apart from the whole, as line apart from triangle and letter apart from syllable, involve separation rather than abstraction.

When we say that form is abstracted from matter, this should not be understood as substantial form since the grasp of such a form and its corresponding matter are mutually dependent on one another as act and its proper matter. The form meant is accidental form, namely, quantity and figure from which the mind cannot abstract sensible qualities, since they presuppose quantity, as is clear in the case of color and surface, nor can anything be subject of motion that is not understood as quantified. Substance, however, which is the intelligible matter of quantity, can exist without quantity. Hence to consider substance without quantity is an instance of separation rather than abstraction. (Wyser ed., 40, ll. 30–42)

In a final summary of what he has said, Thomas deploys all three of the terms that he has used both commonly and properly, in wide and narrow senses:

Thus there is a threefold distinction in the mind's activity: one due to the intellect's act of composing and dividing, which is properly called separation, and this belongs to divine science or metaphysics; another due to the act whereby the quiddities of things are formed, which is the abstraction of form from sensible matter, and this belongs to mathematics; a third, due to the same operation, of the universal from the particular, and this belongs to physics and is found in all the sciences because in every science the incidental is set aside and the essential studied. It was because they did not understand the difference between the last two and the first that Pythagoreans and Platonists fell into the error of positing mathematicals and universals as separate from sensible things. (Wyser ed., 40, ll. 42–41, l. 7)[32]

If this complicated discussion thus enables Thomas to respond to the thematic question of Article 3, which concerns the objects of mathematics, his mention of *separatio* and the way in which it is especially linked to metaphysics has understandably attracted many to this exposition of Boethius. That linking is quite obscure at this point of the discussion and greater clarity on it must be sought.

32. "Sic ergo in operatione intellectus triplex distinctio invenitur: una secundum operationem intellectus componentis et dividentis, quae separatio dicitur proprie, et haec competit scientiae divinae sive metaphysicae; alia secundum operationem, qua formantur quidditates rerum, quae est abstractio formae a materia sensibili, et haec competit mathematicae; tertia secundum eandem operationem universalis a particulari, et haec competit etiam physicae et est communis omnibus scientiis, quia in omni scientiae praetermittitur quod per accidens est, et accipitur quod per se est. Et quia quidem non intellexerunt differentiam duarum ultimarum a prima, inciderunt in errorem, ut ponerent mathematica et universalia a sensibilibus separata, ut Pythagorici et Platonici."

8. Divine Science

The judgment of separation that establishes the possibility that there is a science beyond natural science and mathematics is the judgment that something exists apart from matter and motion. The three speculative sciences involve three different ways in which objects of consideration can be removed or abstracted from matter and motion. Neither the universal considerations of sensible things by physics nor the abstract consideration of quantified substance in mathematics entails that things exist in the way they are considered in these sciences, as if universals and mathematicals as such enjoyed an extramental existence. Metaphysics as a science is predicated on the truth that there are immaterial beings, that is, things that exist apart from matter and motion. The aim of metaphysics as the culminating science of philosophy is knowledge of the divine. This aim is the key to understanding everything that is undertaken in the science of being as being. That the usual demands of a science will be strained almost to the breaking point in this undertaking is first clear when we consider that there can be no question of formulating a general concept of being that would be univocally common to sensible and separate substances. The truth that the commensurate and proper object of the human mind is the essence of sensible things is not abrogated in metaphysics. That which defines philosophy and afortiori defines metaphysics, the desire for knowledge of the divine, confronts the reiterated statement that God cannot be included in the subject matter of metaphysics.[33] St. Thomas considers the implications of this in Article 4 of Question 5 of his exposition on the *De trinitate* of Boethius.

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It is the task of any science to consider the principles and causes of its subject matter, its *genus subiectum*. The explanatory principles of a subject

33. The same of course is true of natural philosophy whose proofs of the prime mover and of the immortality of the soul provide the warrant for a further science. In Thomas's words, ". . . dicendum quod de primo motore non agitur in scientia naturali tanquam de subiecto vel de parte subiecti, sed tamquam de termino ad quem scientia naturalis perducit. Terminus autem non est de natura rei cuius est terminus, sed habet aliquam habitudinem ad rem illam, sicut terminus lineae non est linea, sed habet ad eam aliquem habitudinem. Ita etiam et primus motor est alterius naturae a rebus naturalibus, habet tamen ad eas aliquam habitudinem, inquantum influit eis motum, et sic cadit in consideratione naturalis, scilicet non secundum ipsum, sed inquantum est motor" (*In de trinitate*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 3).

matter, its causes, can be of two quite different sorts. Sometimes the causes of a subject matter are themselves kinds of thing that can form the subject matter of another and distinct science. They are things in themselves that have their own properties and causes but that nonetheless function as explanatory principles of the subject matter of another science. For example, the heavenly bodies bring about effects in terrestrial things, and thus function as principles in the science of the latter, but they can also be the subject of a science, astronomy. Such things receive a twofold consideration, accordingly, in the science where they function as principles of the subject matter and in the science where they constitute the subject matter. (This distinction will be the basis of Thomas's claim that there are two kinds of theology.) Other principles of a science are not things in themselves but are only explanatory principles of the subject matter in question. This sort of principle is discussed only in the science of whose subject matter they are principles.

With this distinction made, Thomas now turns to the twofold way in which we can speak of principles common to all beings. On the one hand, there are principles predicably common to all that is, the kind of community exemplified by "form is common to all forms." This is a community of predication, as opposed to a community of causation, exemplified by the way in which numerically one sun is the cause of all generable things. There are common principles of being in both of these senses. In the first sense we can say that all beings have the same principles according to analogy (*secundum analogiam;* Wyser ed., 47, l. 19); in the second sense, we can say that there are things numerically one that are principles of all the things that are.

> . . . insofar as the principles of accidents are reduced to the principles of substance, and the principles of corruptible substances are reduced to incorruptible substances and thus in a hierarchical order all beings are reduced to certain principles. Because that which is the principle of existing for all things must be maximal being, as is said in *Metaphysics* II, such principles must be most complete and accordingly maximally in act, such that they have little or nothing of potency, since act is prior and more powerful than potency, as is said in *Metaphysics* IX. Wherefore they must be without matter, which is in potency, and without motion, which is the act of a being in potency. Such things are divine, since if the divine exists anywhere, it especially exists in such an immaterial and immobile being, as is said in *Metaphysics* VI. (Wyser ed., 47, 21 to 48, l. 6)[34]

34. ":. . . prout scilicet principia accidentium reducuntur in principia substantiae, et principia substantiarum corruptibilium reducuntur in substantias incorruptibiles, et sic quodam

The procedure sketched in this passage, with references to the *Metaphysics,* provides us with the itinerary of this culminating philosophical endeavor. The community of predication will follow on the cognitive journey that has been laid out. Careful analysis of the being commensurate with our intellect, sensible beings, will provide the basis both for knowledge of immaterial being and the extension of terms to signify what comes to be known. We name things as we know them.

As has been mentioned, these considerations enable Thomas to distinguish two kinds of theology. Divine things are instances of the first sort of principle mentioned above: not only are they explanatory of other things, they are things in themselves. Can there be a science of which the divine is the subject matter? Metaphysics is certainly not that science. In it, the divine functions only as a principle of knowing its subject matter, being as being. This grounds expanded knowledge of the divine, but only insofar as the route to it enables us to extend analogically to the divine terms whose original and natural habitat is the sensible world. The philosopher's knowledge of God is the paradoxical effort to extend our knowledge and language far beyond its natural range. Imperfect and dissatisfying as it must be, such knowledge is the ultimate end of man. A little knowledge of what is best, Aristotle wrote, is preferable to extensive knowledge of the less perfect. But of course it is the latter that provides the springboard to the former.

And this is the way philosophers arrive at them, which is clear from Romans 1: "his invisible attributes are clearly seen—his everlasting power also and divinity—being understood through the things that are made." Hence such divine things are treated by philosophers only insofar as they are the principles of all things, in that doctrine in

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gradu et ordine in quaedam principia omnia entia reducuntur. Et quia id, quod est principium essendi omnibus, oportet esse maxime ens, ut dicitur in II Metaphysicorum, ideo huiusmodi principia oportet esse completissima et propter hoc oportet esse maxime actu, ut nihil vel minimum habeant de potentia, quia actus est prior et potior potentia, ut dicitur in IX Metaphysicorum. Et propter hoc oportet ea esse absque materia, quae est in potentia, et absque motu, qui est actus existentis in potentia. Et huiusmodi sunt res divinae, quia si divinum alicubi existit, in tali natura immateriali scilicet et immobili maxime existit, ut dicitur in VI Metaphsicorum." The plural *res divinae* is meant to include the angels or separate substances as well as God: "Sed in scientia divina, quam philosophi tradunt, consideratur de angelis, quos intelligentias vocant, eadem ratione qua de prima causa, quae est Deus, in quantum ipsi etiam sunt rerum principia secunda, saltem per motum orbium, quibus quidem nullus motus physicus accidere potest" (*In de trinitate*, q. 5, a. 4., ad 3).

which are posited what is common to all beings, which has for its subject being as being, and this science they called divine science. (Wyser ed. 48, ll. 14–19)[35]

After that important if familiar reminder, Thomas now speaks of theology in another sense, one that has as its subject matter the divine. How is this possible? If God should speak to us and tell us things about himself we could not otherwise know. The science based upon such a revelation has a privileged access to God and is as it were a participation in God's knowledge of himself. In this science, the divine can be treated in itself and not simply as cause of other things.

So there are two theologies. One is philosophical, in which the divine is treated as cause of the subject matter, and this is what is called metaphysics. And the other is theology, based upon Sacred Scripture in which divine things constitute the subject matter.

And now we are given an application of the criteria that have guided Question 5 to these two theologies. Divine science, we recall, was said to be concerned with things that can both be understood without matter and that exist apart from matter. This separation from matter and motion is different in the two theologies, a difference based on a twofold way in which things can be said to exist separately from matter and motion.

In one way such that it is of the very nature of the thing that is called separate that it can in no wise be in matter and motion, as God and the angels are said to be separate from matter and motion; in another way, such that it is not in its definition to be in matter and motion—it can exist without matter and motion—although sometimes it is found in matter and motion, and thus being, substance, potency, and act are separate from matter and motion, because they do not depend on matter and motion in order to exist, as mathematicals do that can never exist apart from matter though they can be understood without sensible matter. Philosophical theology treats of things separate in the second way as its subjects and of things separate in the first way as principles of its subject. But the theology of Sacred Scripture treats things separate in the first way as its subjects although it also considers things that are in matter and motion insofar as they cast light on divine things. (Wyser ed., 48, l. 35 to 49, l. 8)[36]

35. "Et hoc modo philosophi in ea pervenerunt, quod patet Rom. 1, 'Invisibilia Dei per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta conspiciuntur.' Unde et huiusmodi res divinae non tractantur a philosophis nisi sunt rerum omnium principia, et ideo pertractantur in illa doctrina, in qua ponuntur ea quae sunt communia omnibus entibus, quae habet subiectum ens inquantum est ens, et haec scientia apud eos scientia divina dictur."

36. "Uno modo sic quod de ratione ipsius rei, quae separata dicitur, sit quod nullo modo in materia et motu esse possit, sicut Deus et angeli dicuntur a materia et motu separati; alio modo sic, quod non sit de ratione eius, quod sit in materia et motu, sed possit esse sine materia et motu, quamvis quandoque inveniatur in materia et motu, et sic ens et substantia et potentia et actus sunt separata a materia et motu, quia secundum esse a materia et motu non dependent,

Philosophical theology has thus been lodged within metaphysics insofar as the consideration of the first and most universal causes of its subject matter, common being, falls to the study of that subject matter. Philosophical theology is the culminating task of metaphysics which in turn is the culminating task of philosophy, the ultimate goal with which the goals of the particular sciences are pursued.

9. *Proemium* to the *Metaphysics*

The genre of the *proemium* to a commentary on a classical work has a long history, in the course of which a series of discussions became mandatory. A glance at Boethius's *proemium* to commentaries on Porphyry gives an indication of how formalized the genre had become. One was to be told the name of the author, the title of the work, the part of philosophy to which the text about to be read belongs, and so forth. Thomas's *proemium* to the *De sensu et sensibilibus* becomes an extended introduction to all the natural writings of Aristotle, establishing their interrelations and overall order. His *proemia* to the two commentaries he wrote on logical works of Aristotle are similarly concerned with their placement within the Organon, however loosely, or personally, he employed the genre. The *proemium* to the commentary on the *Metaphysics* is sui generis. There is no internal suggestion at all that it is meant to function as a preface to his commentary on a work of Aristotle. Rather it is an ingenious tour de force that enables Thomas to characterize philosophical wisdom, distinguish the theoretical sciences from one another, and state what the subject matter and principles of the science are, ending with a note on nomenclature.

Given this, it is perhaps not surprising that some scholars have entertained the notion that what Thomas is doing in the *proemium* is presenting his personal notion of what metaphysics is and thus establishing a distance between himself and the text he is about to explicate. The suggestion is that there is a conceptual gap between two views of metaphysics, Thomas's per-

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sicut mathematica dependebant, quae nunquam nisi in materia esse possunt, quamvis sine materia sensibili possint intelligi. Theologica vero philosophica determinat de separatis secundo modo sicut de subiectis, de separatis autem primo modo sicut de principiis subiecti. Theologia vero sacrae Scripturae tractat de separatis primo modo de subiectis, quamvis in ea tractentur aliqua, quae sunt in materia et motu, secundum quod requirit rerum divinarum manifestatio."

sonal view, as expressed in the *proemium*, and Aristotle's, to be gleaned from a close reading of the text. Those with eyes to see, it is suggested, will discern significant discrepancies between the two views.

Let us look at the *proemium*.

Thomas begins with a maxim from Aristotle's *Politics* to the effect that where there is an order among things, one of them must be first, as soul takes precedence over body and reason over sense appetites. But all the sciences are undertaken for the sake of perfecting man, so one of them must be primary. It will be called wisdom, since it is the role of the wise to order. But which of the sciences is wisdom? A second reference to the *Politics* puts before us the claim that those stronger of intellect are naturally the rulers of those merely strong in body. Ruling and ordering being thus related to intellect, we are then told that the most intellectual science will be that which deals with the most intelligible things.

In virtue of what can things be called more or most intelligible? Thomas suggests a threefold basis.

First, the order of understanding *(ordo intelligendi)*. The intellect gains certainty when it grasps the cause and on this basis we can call that science most intellectual and regulative of the others that considers the first causes.

Second, on the comparison of intellect to sense. Sense knowledge is of particulars, one sees this or that, hears that or this, but intellect grasps the universal. On this basis, the science that is concerned with the most universal is the most intellectual and regulative of the others. What are the most universal principles? Being, and what follows on it,namely, one and many, potency and act. These, we are told, ought not to be left unconsidered, since knowledge of them is presupposed by knowledge of a kind or species of being. But these considerations are too broad for any particular science and it would not do to have each science take them up prior to setting out on its proper task. Let there be, then, a common science that treats these most universal matters, and it will be the most intellectual, and regulative of the others.[37]

37. "Unde et illa scientia maxime est intellectualis, quae circa principia maxime universalia versatur. Quae quidem sunt ens, et ea quae consequuntur ens, ut unum et multa, potentia et actus. Huiusmodi autem non debent omnino indeterminata remanere, cum sine his completa cognitio de his, quae sunt propria alicui generis vel speciei, haberi non possit. Nec iterum in una aliqua particulari scientia tractari debent: quia cum his unumquodque genus entium ad

Third, from the nature of intellectual knowledge *(ex ipsa cognitione intellectus)*. Something is an object of intellect on the basis of removal from matter, and on this basis things that are most removed from matter can be called most intelligible and the science that deals with them the most intellectual, and regulative of the others. Things are said to be maximally separate from matter that not only abstract from particular matter (natural science), but from all matter. But here we must distinguish between abstraction from matter merely in the order of understanding (mathematicals) and in the order of existence, for example, God and the intelligences. The science concerned with such things is the most intellectual, and regulative of the others.

Have we come up with one science or with several? Thomas argues that they all point to one and the same science. The first causes are the first and universal causes of being, so this unites what emerges from consideration of the first two bases. It belongs to the same science to consider a subject matter and the causes of its subject matter. That is why it falls to the same science to consider common being *(ens commune)* as its subject matter, and separate substances that are the common and most universal causes of being. Wisdom thus considers three things—first causes, the most universal, and the most immaterial—but not all in the same way. The subject of this science is being in common *(ens commune)* and the subject of a science is that whose principles and causes are sought, that being the end sought. Although common being is the subject of the science, being as common to all the things that are, it is nonetheless said to be concerned as a whole with things separate from matter both in existence and understanding: "Because not only things that can never be in matter, such as God and the intellectual substances, are said to be separated in existence and notion, but also those that can exist without matter, such as common being. This would not be the case if they depended on matter in order to exist."[38]

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sui cognitionem indigeat, pari ratione in qualibet particulari scientia tractarentur. Unde restat quod in una communi scientia huiusmodi tracterentur; quae cum maxime intellectualis sit, est aliarum regulatrix."

38. "Quia secundum esse et rationem separari dicuntur, non solum illa quae nunquam in materia esse possunt, sicut Deus et intellectuales substantiae, sed etiam illa quae possunt sine materia esse, sicut ens commune. Hoc tamen non contingeret, si a materia secundum esse dependeret."

The *proemium* ends by suggesting that the three names by which this science is known are related to the three bases for identifying it. It is called "Theology" because it considers separate substances, and "Metaphysics" insofar as it considers being and what follows on it, and this is something undertaken after the study of physics, as the more common after the less common. Finally, it is called "First Philosophy" insofar as it considers the first causes. "Thus it is clear what the subject of this science is, how it differs from other sciences, and what it is called." Although the *proemium* does not explicitly call itself a *proemium*, it seems fanciful to think of this as a free-floating independent essay.

In any case, the *proemium* succinctly summarizes what we have found in the commentary on the *De trinitate* of Boethius. The degrees of removal from matter involved in the three speculative sciences is particularly brief but for all that a summary of what is established at more length in the Boethian commentary. Philosophical wisdom, variously called first philosophy, theology, and metaphysics, receives the last name because it comes after natural science *in via resolutionis*, meaning that it takes its discussion back to principles that are more common than those of natural science. When being and what follows on it, one and many, act and potency, are said to be most universal, this is clarified by distinguishing the way they are treated in metaphysics from the way they are treated *in qualibet particulari scientia*. Its subject matter is more common, that is, predicable of more things than the objects of the particular sciences. How do we know this greater community? How do we know that being is not restricted in its predicable range to the objects of natural science and mathematics? *Hoc tamen non contingeret si a materia secundum esse dependerent.* But how do we know that?

The *proemium* is itself a sapiential overview. Insofar as it functions as a preface to the study of metaphysics, it will assume what that study assumes and mention what that science attempts to do. If the reader of the *proemium* is, as presumably he is, a fledgling, someone about to undertake the study of metaphysics under the guidance of a master, he will accept what he reads here as authoritative. *Oportet addiscentem credere.* But however fledgling in metaphysics, his mind is not a blank slate, and much of what he reads in the *proemium* will remind him of what he already knows. Coming to metaphysics

from, *inter alia*, the study of natural science, he will doubtless see the significance of the claim that being is not restricted to material being. He is unlikely to think that we just know that being is not restricted to material being, as if this were obvious or self-evident.

All in all, the *proemium* is a remarkable compendium of what is found elsewhere in St. Thomas and will be corroborated in the exposition of the text of the *Metaphysics*. However, it conveys Thomas's uncanny ability to summarize and relate different matters, and of course in that sense may be called a personal expression of his understanding of the matters at issue; but the *proemium* offers no support for the view that Thomas had developed a personal view of metaphysics at odds with that to be found in the commentary that follows.

Nine ~ THE *METAPHYSICS* AS A LITERARY WHOLE

Thomas commented on the first twelve books of the *Metaphysics* but was aware of M and N as well. From first to last, his commentary insists on the orderly discussion of the work and clearly views it as a unified whole. One of the chief tasks of a commentator is to display the order of the text before him. That being so, it is possible, on the basis of overt allusions to that order—among the various books, within a given book—to give a swift overview of the *Metaphysics* as Thomas reads it.

His commentary begins with his own *prooemium*, as we have seen, but he finds in the opening three chapters of Book One Aristotle's own preface to the work he is undertaking. Those chapters stir the pulse of the most jaded reader, and Thomas's comments on them bring to light their implications. Thomas remarks that this Aristotelian *prooemium* makes two major points, first, that this science that is called wisdom considers causes, and second, the kind of causes it considers. Under the first heading, he first sets out some presuppositions from which he will derive a conclusion and then he presents the argument for his thesis. But the first thing to be established is the dignity of science as such and the hierarchical order of kinds of knowing. The dignity of science is manifested by the opening sentence, "All men by nature desire to know."

From Sensation to Wisdom

Three bases for this natural desire for knowledge are listed by Thomas. First, everything naturally desires its own perfection, as matter desires form and generally the imperfect seeks to be perfect. Man's intellect is potentially all things, a potentiality that is actualized by knowledge. Thus, we can be said naturally to desire knowledge as matter desires form. Reference is made to *On the Soul*, Book Three.

A second reason for our innate desire for knowledge is based on the fact that everything has a natural inclination to its proper activity or operation. But knowing or understanding is the operation peculiar to man. Hence by a natural desire man is inclined to understanding, to knowing. (# 2)[1]

Third, for everything union with its cause is desirable, for in that its perfection consists. After referring to the way in which this is exhibited by circular motion in the *Physics*, Book Eight, Thomas observes that separated substances are the cause of the human intellect to which it relates as imperfect to perfect. But it is by way of knowing that man is united with such principles and in that union consists man's happiness. That is why man naturally desires to know. (# 3)

The second sentence of the text begins the display of the hierarchy of kinds of knowing. "A sign of this is the pleasure we take in sensation, particularly the sense of sight. . . ." The senses have a twofold purpose: to secure the necessities of life, but also simply to sense without further purpose. Sight is singled out as the sense that make differences known to us and that is delightful even for its own sake. Thomas then engages in a comparison of sight to the other senses in order to make clear its priority. The discussion explicitly relies on Aristotle's *On the Soul*. (# 4)

This mention of sensation and comparison of the senses leads on to a hierarchy among animals based on sensation. Being capable of sensation is what marks the animal off from lesser living things. Touch is the most basic of the senses—it is in a way a component of all the other senses—and every animal has at least it. Sight is the most perfect of the senses with respect to knowing but touch is the most necessary, as coming first in the way of generation. (# 9) Thomas then distinguishes three grades of life in brute animals: some have sense but not memory because in them sensation is not the prelude to an image *(phantasia),* the prerequisite of memory *(phantasia)*. (# 10) Because some animals have memory and some do not, some animals are prudent and

1. The paragraph numbers refer to the Cathala-Spiazzi edition published by Marietti: *S. Thomae Aquinatis In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio*. There is no Leonine edition of the commentary yet available. Despite the practice followed in the first volumes, in recent years the Leonine Commission, in its editions and reeditions of the commentaries, has eschewed numbering paragraphs, making reference to the text cumbersome and, more importantly, making it difficult to locate the text in the editions that scholars have used for the better part of a century. This makes reference to the Marietti editions of the commentaries a professional duty.

others are not, prudence presupposing memory of the past and looking to the future. Appeal is made to Cicero's *Rhetoric* for this point. Thomas then distinguishes the meaning of 'prudence' applied to brutes from its meaning when applied to men, referring to *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book Six. A third class of animals has hearing as well as memory, and these can be taught because "auditus est sensus disciplinae." (# 12)

> It is clear then that there are three grades of knowledge in animals. The first is that of those who have neither hearing nor memory and thus are not teachable and do not have prudence. The second is of those that have memory but not hearing: they are teachable but have no prudence. The third is of those who have both and are prudent and teachable. There could not be a fourth grade, for example, an animal with hearing but not memory, for the senses that grasp their object through an external medium, among which hearing is numbered, are only found in animals that move with progressive motion, and they cannot lack memory, as has been said. (# 13)

Thomas next turns to the grades of knowledge found in man, showing first that man excels the brutes in the kind of knowing already discussed, namely, sensation. Aristotle has said that animals are ruled by memory and imagination, the imperfect animals by imagination, the perfect by memory. If they have both, they are ruled by the more perfect. Animal life here is not to be understood as the being of the living thing. According to the maxim of *On the Soul*, "*vivere est esse viventibus*," but that refers to the substantial being of the thing whereas here life means the activity of living that presupposes the former. This is taken to imply that in animals knowledge is not sought for its own sake but for the necessities of life.

The first mark of human knowing is experience, which animals either do not have or have only in a lesser sense. "Experience is the gathering of many singulars received in memory." This gathering is said to be peculiar to man thanks to the cogitative sense, also called "particular reason": reason proper gathers universal intentions, whereas particular reason gathers singular intentions. While some animals seem to share in particular reason, it is the mark of man that he possesses universal reason whereby he lives and which is principal in him. (# 15)

This is summed up in an analogy. As experience is to particular reason and custom to memory in animals, so is art to universal reason. Human life is perfected by art. (# 16) Experience is now contrasted with art. From the

point of view of action, experience would seem to be indistinguishable from art. Both bear on the singular and one who is experienced may be more effective than one who has merely knowledge of why a certain remedy cures. It is this sick man who is treated, and experience, though lacking in universal knowledge, is based on the memory of past singular efforts. Of course, to have both experience and knowledge of the universal would be best. Although the comparison of experience and art may seem to lead to a putdown of art, the introduction of art is crucial to what follows. As knowledge, art is superior to experience precisely because it grasps the why or the cause and in this one possessing the art is wiser. The wise man not only knows that something is the case but also why. This leads to a recognition of a hierarchy among arts. Particular arts know particular causes, but the master art (architecture) knows the overall end to which each is ordered. In this the master art makes its possessor wiser.

A further mark of the superiority of art to experience is that one who has the art, who knows the why or cause, can teach others. The experienced person can coach others, invite them to follow his example, but cannot say why what is done works, only that it has worked in the past.

A further note, already adumbrated when sight was first mentioned, now becomes dominant. "Art" is used generically for knowledge of the cause but now its proper sense as skill in making, as ordered to practice, is recognized, and distinguished from those skills that are sciences thanks to which knowledge is pursued for its own sake. Such sciences arise when the necessities of life are sufficiently provided for and the leisure that fosters their pursuit is available. Aristotle remarks that he has distinguished art and science and other faculties in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and Thomas devotes # 34 to a resume of what is found in Book Six of the *Ethics*.

The first lesson of Thomas's commentary, devoted to Aristotle's first chapter, concludes with a summary statement.

> He now exhibits his main point on the basis of the foregoing considerations. Hence he says that "the point of our present discussion," the reason for the foregoing, is that the science that is called wisdom seems to be concerned with first causes and first principles. This follows from what has been said since anyone is wiser to the degree that he has knowledge of the cause, as has been said. The experienced man is wiser than the brute, which has only sensation without experience, and the artisan is wiser than any merely experienced person. Among artisans the architect or project manager

is wiser than those having only particular arts. Furthermore, among the arts and sciences, the speculative are of more account as knowledge than the practical. All this follows from what has been said. It follows therefore that the science that is unqualifiedly wisdom is concerned with causes. (# 35)

It is noteworthy that in this brief passage Thomas says four times that the conclusions drawn follow from what Aristotle has said. A commentator makes explicit the order and reasoning of the text.

From Wise to Wisdom

The first chapter ends with the remark that "Clearly wisdom is knowledge about certain causes and principles." But what kind of causes and principles? In his summary statement just given, Thomas has anticipated the question by speaking of first causes and principles. Thomas's commentary on the second chapter, which contains the rest of Aristotle's *prooemium* to the whole work, is divided into two lessons, in the first of which he considers Aristotle's derivation of the meaning of 'wisdom' from the way we speak of men as wise.

There are three moments in the discussion. First, he derives a definition of wisdom from what is said of the wise man and of wisdom. Second, he shows that what emerges applies to the universal science that considers first and universal causes. Third, he spells out the conclusion.

The marks of the wise man are six: he knows everything, up to a point. The wise florist knows his roses but of course he doesn't know each and every rose. There are innumerable instances of rose and our intellect cannot comprehend an infinite. Second, the wise man knows difficult things; he is set off from others by the fact that he knows what is not easily and commonly known. Third, he has certainty beyond the ordinary. (Thomas's text has *certiorem* for *akribesteron*.) Fourth, he can teach what he knows, teaching being accomplished by showing the cause. Fifth—here there is a transition from 'wise' to 'wisdom'—wisdom is most desirable and sought for its own sake, more desirable than knowledge which aims at assuring the necessities of life, "*delectatio et huiusmodi*." Pleasure here should doubtless be attached to the knowledge as desirable rather than to outcome. Finally, wisdom excels in dignity since it is the mark of the wise man to order and direct rather than to be ordered. Thomas devotes a further paragraph to developing this sixth char-

acteristic, illustrating the point by the hierarchical arrangement of lesser arts under a governing art, as in the master art already mentioned and in the captain of the ship as well, who can direct the building of a vessel since he knows its overall purpose.

From these considerations it is possible to form what Thomas calls a *descriptio sapientiae*. "He is called wise who knows all things, even the difficult with certainty and in their causes, such knowledge being sought for its own sake, and enabling one to direct and teach others." This can be considered the major of a syllogism: every wise man is such-and-such and, conversely, whoever is such-and-such is wise.

Thomas notes that next Aristotle shows that this description will fit one who knows first and universal causes. "Universal" is introduced to cover "knows everything," but in what sense can knowledge of the universal be so characterized? One can of course say that to know the universal is thereby to know what falls under it, and the more universal the concept the more things it covers. But how can such universal knowledge be said to be difficult of acquisition? Thomas counters this claim with a reminder of what was said at the outset of the *Physics*: general or universal knowledge is first and therefore easiest.

> But it should be said that the more universal in simple apprehension is first known, for the first thing the intellect grasps is being, as Avicenna says, and the intellect knows animal before it knows man. In much the same way as in natural being the animal is first actualized and then man, so in the acquisition of science the intellect grasps animal before man. But with respect to the investigation of natural properties and causes, the less common is prior because it is through particular causes, which are in one genus or species, that we come to universal causes. Those things that are universal causes are known last by us, though they are naturally most intelligible, whereas predicable universals are in a certain way known by us before the less universal, though not before singulars, because sense knowledge in us precedes intellectual knowledge which is of universals. (# 46)

As if unhappy with this explanation, Thomas now draws attention to the adverb *fere (sxedon)* modifying the claim that universals are difficult to know—"on the whole" is Ross's rendering. He goes on to make it clear that it is universal causes not predicable universals that are difficult to know. (Recall the discussion of the most universal as most intelligible in Thomas's *prooemium*.) Universal causes, that is, immaterial substances, exist wholly sepa-

rate from matter, and these are indeed more difficult for us to know—"even than universals"—and that is why this science, which is called wisdom, is the last we learn however much it be first in dignity. Here for the first time we have touched upon one of the most vexing questions about the science that is wisdom. Its subject matter is being as being, which would seem to be predicably most universal—anything can be called a being—but that subject will be our avenue to knowledge of the most universal causes, the causes of being as such.

A similar difficulty is encountered in applying "most certain" to wisdom. Aristotle's way of establishing this is the claim that a science that uses fewer principles is more certain than one that needs several, as arithmetic is more certain than geometry. The point adds situation to unity, which is the principle of number. In much the same way, particular sciences are posterior to more universal sciences because the subjects of the former add to the subject of the latter. "Mobile being with which natural philosophy is concerned adds mobile to being simply speaking, the subject of metaphysics. That is why the science of being and the most universal is most certain." That it employs fewer principles should not be taken to contradict what was said earlier about wisdom knowing everything. Why not? "Because the universal contains fewer things actually but many potentially, and insofar as a science is more certain fewer things in act are needed for the consideration of its subject." Here universal is once more the predicable universal. Thomas adds that we can see here the reason for the uncertainty of practical sciences that have to consider many circumstances of particular things to be done.

The application of the fourth and fifth characteristics—that the wise man can teach and that wisdom is sought for its own sake—is without difficulty, and so too with the sixth. Thomas ends with a summary of what has been established.

> From the foregoing he draws the intended conclusion, saying that it is clear from what has been said that all these characteristics of wisdom belong to one and the same science which is theoretical, that is, speculates about first principles and causes. This follows because it is clear that the six characteristics belong to the science that considers universal causes. But, because the sixth condition touches on consideration of the end, which the ancients did not clearly number among the causes, as will be seen below, he specially insists that this is a condition of the same science that considers first causes because the end, which is the good, for the sake of which others come about,

is one of the causes. Hence the science that considers first and universal causes must also consider the universal end of all things, which is the best thing in the whole of nature. (# 51)

That God should be the ultimate end of all things is here taken to be at least historically more problematic than that he is their ultimate efficient cause.

The Eulogy of Wisdom

Now the supreme dignity of wisdom will be enlarged on, as well as the goal it seeks.

That wisdom is a speculative rather than a practical science is a first mark of its priority. Its speculative character emerges from reflection on wonder as the source of inquiry. Wonder is an indication that one does not understand, has not the why of what is seen, and wonder is assuaged when knowledge of the cause is attained. Philosophizing, triggered by wonder, is thus seen as a flight from ignorance. Men first wondered about obvious things, then about greater ones, such as the heavenly bodies, their movements, eclipses, and so on. "Whence even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for myth is composed of wonders." What does Thomas make of this? "This is why those early thinkers like Perseus and others, called the seven wise men, treated the principles of things in fables. The reason the philosopher is compared with the poet is that both are concerned with objects of wonder. For the fables composed by poets are made up of wonders and philosophers were motivated by wonder to philosophize. Since wonder stems from ignorance, it is clear that they were moved to philosophize in order that they might flee ignorance. And from this it is obvious that they sought knowledge diligently solely in order to know and not for the sake of any use or usefulness." (# 55)

Thomas asks us to notice how philosophy has become synonymous with wisdom in the text, and he recalls the tale of Pythagoras who out of modesty asked to be called a lover of wisdom rather than wise. This designation corroborates the fact that wisdom is sought for its own sake. "For one who seeks something for the sake of something else, loves that something else more than what he seeks." It is this that makes wisdom free, for free men act for their own sake and thus wisdom that is sought for itself alone is freest among the sciences. Thomas glosses this by noting that it can be understood in two

ways. First, in saying that wisdom alone of the sciences is free we are reminded of the fact that some arts are called liberal because they are ordered to knowledge rather than utility. Second, among the causes sought by wisdom is numbered the final cause and because it seeks the ultimate and universal end of all, all the other sciences are ordered to it as to their end. So it especially is for its own sake.

We now arrive at the paradoxical observation that this commanding end of all inquiry seems to be beyond our capacity. Human nature is in many ways in bondage, in need of things that often take precedence over what is sought for its own sake. Thomas cites the *Topics* to the effect that while philosophizing is better than the acquisition of wealth, sometimes the latter is more desirable, for example, to one in want of the necessities. Thus man is often impeded from the pursuit of wisdom nor is it just at his fingertips *(ad nutum)*. For all that, the diminished way in which we can have it is preferable to what is gained by all the other sciences.

Aristotle had cited Simonides that God alone can have the privilege of this science, a view Thomas characterizes as an error. Are we to think that we should concentrate only on knowledge aimed at utility? This error of Simonides stems from the error of some poets who said that God out of jealousy does not want us to have such knowledge. If God did begrudge us things, it would make sense that he should most begrudge us this most honorable of things. But it is false that God is jealous. Jealousy is sadness at the prosperity of others, which is only possible if another's good is thought to diminish one's own. But God is not sad since he is subject to no evil nor could his good be diminished by that of another since it is from his goodness, as from an inexhaustible font, that all goods flow. That is why Plato denied that God could be jealous. But bards tell many a lie, and this is one of them.

That this is the most honorable science is established by a syllogism. That science is most honorable that is most divine; but this science is most divine; therefore it is the most honorable. How do we know that the minor premiss is true? "A science is called divine in two ways and only this science is called divine in both. A science is called divine because God has it, first, and, second, because it is concerned with the divine. That this science alone fulfills both senses is manifest because, being of first causes and principles, it must be concerned with God, because everyone understands him to be a cause and

the principle of all else. So too the science that is concerned with God and first causes either is had by God alone, or if not, especially by him. Only he has it with complete comprehension. But it is also had by men in the way men can have it, though it cannot be a possession of theirs, but is had as what could be lost. All other sciences are more necessary than wisdom but none is as worthy as it.

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Philosophy begins in wonder, which is a sign of ignorance, and ends in the contrary state, knowledge of the causes of things.

How Thomas Read the *Metaphysics*

I intend to give Thomas's summary understanding of the *Metaphysics*, a work he displays as remarkable for its order and development. Once this comprehensive view is before us, we can turn to a comparison of Thomas and rival views on key points.

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After the prefatory remarks in which Aristotle locates this culminating effort of philosophy against a rich background of the human quest for knowledge, he gets to work. (# 69) Wisdom is a science that seeks to explain everything through their first causes and principles. This is an effort that antedates Aristotle of course, so out of respect for the history and tradition in which he stands, Aristotle lays before us what his predecessors had to say about the first causes of things. When he is done, Thomas gives us his version of Aristotle's summary:

> Here be brings together what the ancients have said about principles, saying that, as is clear from previous writings, the ancients sought to find the causes as we distinguished them in the *Physics* and that it is clear from their writing that they do not suggest any other kind of cause. They spoke of these causes obscurely, however, and while in a certain sense they hit on all of them, in another sense they missed them all. It is as when children begin to speak and do so imperfectly and babbling, so when philosophy was young the first philosophers seem to speak indistinctly and imperfectly in all they say about principles. This is clear when Empedocles speaks of bones having a ratio, that is, proportional mixture, but this is the essence and substance of the thing. The same thing is required of flesh and all the others, or of none, for they are all made up of elements. From this it is clear that flesh and bone and all the rest are not what

they are [*non sunt id quod sunt*] on account of matter, by which he means the four elements, but rather because of this formal principle. Empedocles is as it were by necessity forced to this truth that others stated more clearly then he. And just as they did not make clear the nature of form, so they were unclear on matter, as was said above about Anaxagoras. The same is true of any other principle. But what they had to say however imperfectly has been set down. All this will be recapitulated in Book Three when we ask what might be said pro or con on the basis of these views. It may well be that the investigation of these difficulties [*dubitationes*] will help in the formulation of the doubts that will be raised and solved in the course of this science. (# 272)

Book Two

When he turns to Book Two, Thomas provides as transition the remark that Aristotle, having criticized what his predecessors had to say of the first principles of things, which is his primary concern, now sets about establishing the truth of the matter.

First philosophy considers truth differently than do the particular sciences. Any particular science considers a particular truth confined to a determinate kind of being, as geometry is concerned with the magnitude of things, and arithmetic with numbers. But first philosophy considers the universal truth of beings, and that is why this philosopher must consider man's knowledge of truth. (# 273)[2]

The task ahead is twofold: first, an inquiry into universal truth; second, he will seek the truth about first principles, as well as everything else that pertains to this science, and we are referred to Book Three.[3] As for Book Two itself, Thomas sees a threefold task. First, how it is with man in considering the truth. Second, what science ought chiefly to consider this matter. Third, he shows the way to consider the truth.[4] With respect to the four causes, Aristo-

2. "Aliter autem se habet consideratio philosophiae primae circa veritatem, et aliarum particularium scientiarum. Nam unaquaeque particularis scientia considerat quamdam particularem veritatem circa determinatum genus entium, ut geometria circa rerum magnitudines, arithmetica circa numeros. Sed philosophia prima considerat universalem veritatem entium. Et ideo ad hunc philosophum pertinet considerare, quomodo se habeat homo ad veritatem cognoscendam."

3. "In prima parte determinat 'ea quae pertinent ad considerationem universalis veritatis.' In secunda incipit inquirere veritatem de primis principiis et omnibus aliis, ad quae extenditur huius philosophiae consideratio, et hoc *in tertio libro*."

4. "Prima autem pars dividitur in partes tres. In prima dicit 'qualiter se habet homo ad considerationem vertitatis.'" (# 144) "In secundo ostendit ad quam scientiam principaliter

tle shows that there must be a first, ultimate cause in each of the four causes. (Lectiones 2–4)

Book Three

Having discussed the way truth is to be considered, Aristotle now begins the consideration of truth, first of all by way of disputation, showing the difficulties that arise concerning the truth of things.[5]

The book of *aporiai* receives much clarification at Thomas's hands. A first issue has to do with the relationship between the initial list of difficulties and the difficulties as they are actually discussed in the course of the book. A feature of Thomas's commentary is his locating of the resolution of a difficulty in later books, when such a resolution can be found.

Book Four

After discussing in a disputatious way the difficulties that confront this science, Aristotle switches into a demonstrative mode in order to determine the true solution to these difficulties.

Among the difficulties discussed in the preceding book, some pertain to the mode of the science, that is, to what falls within the scope of the science, while others refer to the things included in the science. Knowledge of the how should precede knowledge of the what, following what was said in Book Two, so that is how he will begin. The mode of the science is the burden of Book Four, and after that he will turn, in Book Five, to lay out the things considered in the science.[6] In Book Four itself, he will first establish

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pertineat cognitio veritatis." (# 151 = lect. 2) "In tertia parte ostendit modum considerandae veritatis." (# 171 = lect. 5)

5. "Et primo procedit modo disputativo, ostendens ea quae sunt dubitabilia circa rerum veritatem." (# 338)

6. "Fuit autem in praecedenti libro disputatum tam de his quae pertinet ad modum huius scientiae, scilicet ad quae se extendit huius scientiae consideratio, quam etiam de his quae sub consideratione huius scientiae cadunt. Et quia prius oportet cognoscere modum scientiae quam procedere in scientiae ad consideranda de quibus est scientiae, ut in secundo libro dictum est, ideo dividitur haec pars in duas.

Primo dicat de quibus est consideratio huius scientiae. Secondo dicit de rebus quae sub considratione huius scientiae cadunt, *in quinto libro*." (# 529)

the subject of the science and then, at # 534, take up difficulties raised concerning it.[7]

Book Five

Perhaps no part of the commentary reveals Thomas's understanding of the text as clearly as what he does with Book Five. Long considered merely a random list of philosophical terms, perhaps an introduction to Aristotelian jargon, its connection with the task of the *Metaphysics* went unsuspected. Even Reale, who had triumphed over the received opinions of genetic interpreters, balked at finding Book Five at home in the sequence of books, let alone precisely between Books Four and Six. Thomas experiences no such difficulty.

In this book, Aristotle takes up the things this science must consider. The things considered in this science being common to all, they are not predicated univocally but rather in an order of priority and posteriority of different things, something established in Book 4; here he first takes up the meanings of the terms used in this science. And since a science considers a subject, its properties, and its causes, it is on that basis that Book Five is arranged, first words signifying causes, then those signifying the subject ,and finally those signifying the properties of being as being.[8]

Book Six

In Book Four, it was established that this science considered both being and one as well as whatever follows on being as being and that such things are

7. (# 529)

8. # 749: "In praecedenti libro determinavit Philosophus quid pertineat ad considerationem huius scientiae; hic incipit determiare de rebus, quas scientia ista considerat.

Et quia ea quae in hac scientia considerantur, sunt omnibus communia, nec dicuntur univoce, sed secundum prius et posterius de diversis, ut in quarto libro est habitum; ideo prius distinguit intentiones nominum, quae in huius scientiae consideratione cadunt. Secundo incipit determinare de rebus, quae sub consideratione huius scientiae cadunt, *in sexto libro*. . . .

Cuiuslibet autem scientiae est considerare subiectum, et passiones, et causas; et ideo hic quintus liber dividitur in tres partes.

Primo determinat distinctiones quae significat causas; secundo illorum nominum quae significant subiectum huius scientiae vel partes eius [lect. 7] . . . tertio nominum quae significant passiones entis inquantum est ens." (lect. 18)

spoken of with multiple meanings, something that called for the clarification of the meanings of the terms signifying the causes and properties as well as the subject of this science, which was done in Book Five. The ground is now clear for a consideration of being and of the other things that follow on it.[9]

But it turns out that there are still other preliminary considerations, and Book Six is concerned with them. First Aristotle will distinguish the way this science deals with being from the way other and particular sciences do, and then he will go on to set aside kinds of being that do not fall to the consideration of this science, namely, accidental being and being in the sense of true.[10]

Books Seven and Eight

Having set aside accidental being and being in the sense of true, Aristotle can now concentrate on being *per se*, that is, what exists outside the soul, which is the principal aim of this science.[11] At this point, Thomas outlines the rest of the work. There are two major considerations, first, of real or *per se* being, the subject of the science, and then, in Book Twelve, the first principles and causes of being as being.

But this first consideration is many faceted. It was established in Book Four that it is the same science that studies being and one. What more fitting, then, than that, after considering being, we take up the one, in Book Ten? But being outside the mind is divided in two ways, first according to the ten categories, second, according to potency and act. That second division falls to Book Nine. That leaves Books Seven and Eight.

The common topic of the two books is substance. They differ in that

9. # 1144: "Postquam Philosophus *in quarto* huius ostendit quod haec scientia considerat de ente et de uno, et de his quae consequuntur ad ens inquantum huiusmodi, et quod omnia ista dicuntur multipliciter, et *in quinto* huius eorum multiplicitatem distinxit, hic incipit de ente determinare, et de aliis quae consequuntur ad ens."

10. "Prima pars dividitur in duas. In prima ostendit modum tractandi de entibus, qui competit huic scientiae per differentiam ad alias scientias. In secunda removet a consideratione huius scientiae ens aliquibus modis dictum, secundum quos modos ens non intenditur principaliter in hac scientia." (lect. 2)

11. # 1245: "Postquam Philosophus removit a principali consideratione huius scientiae ens per accidens, et ens secundum quod significat verum, hic incipit determinare de ente per se, quod est extra animam, de quo est principalis consideratio huius scientiae."

Book Seven considers substance from the viewpoint of logic, that is, the definition and parts of the definition of substance, whereas Book Eight discusses sensible substance in the light of its proper principles, applying to them what has been determined earlier logically.[12] The "logical" consideration of substance is an integral step toward completing the treatment of substance.[13] At the outset of Book Eight, Thomas provides us with summarizing paragraph, stressing how the *Metaphysics* hangs together.

He recalls some things he has already said because in Book Seven he noted that what we chiefly seek in this science is the causes, principles, and elements of substances. For since this science considers common being as its proper subject and this is divided into substance and the nine genera of accident and knowledge of accidents is dependent on knowledge of substance, as he proved in [Book] Seven, it follows that the chief concern of this science is substance. Since something is known only when its principles and causes are known, it follows that this science seeks the principles and causes and elements of substance. How these three differ was pointed out in Book Five.[14]

Book Nine

Being is divided by act and potency as well as by the ten categories, and having considered the latter, and chiefly substance, for the reasons given, Aristotle turns now to act and potency As to the point of both inquiries, Thomas reminds us that sensible substance is not the point. As with substance, sen-

12. # 1681: "Postquam determinavit Philosophus *in septimo* de substantia modo logico, considerando scilicet definitionem et partes definitionis, et alia huiusmodi quae secundum rationem considerantur; *in hoc libro octavo* intendit de sensibilibus substantiis determinare per propria principia applicando ea quae superius inquisita sunt logice, ad substantias illas."

13. "Dicit ergo primo quod, cum multa dicta sunt *in septimo* logica consideratione circa substantiam, oportet syllogizare ex his quae dicta sunt, ut applicentur quae secundum considerationem logicam dicta sunt, ad res naturales existentes. Et oportet 'colligentes ea,' idest summarie et recapitulatim recolligentes quae dicta sunt, imponere finem complendo tractatum de substantia; quod fiet tractando ea quae sunt superius tractatis desunt."

14. # 1682: "Resumit quaedam quae dicta sunt; quia dictum est *in septimo* quod in hac scientia principaliter quaeruntur causae et principia et elementa substantiarum. Cum enim haec scientia consideret ens commune sicut proprium subiectum, quod quidem dividitur per substantiam et novem genera accidentim, accidentium vero cognitio ex substantai dependet, *ut in septimo* probatum est, relinquitur quod principalis intentio huiusmodi scientiae sit circa substantias. Et quia scire unumquodque non contingit nisi cognitis principiis et causis eius,sequitur quod ad hanc scientiam pertineat inquirere prncipia et causas et elementa substantiarum. Quae tria qualiter different, superius *in quinto* ostensum est."

sible substance was looked at for clues as to what might meaningfully be said of nonsensible substance, so too with potency. Its most proper meaning is of little use here.[15] Our principal aim is to speak of potency and act in intelligible things, separate substances.[16] But, in accordance with our natural way of knowing, we must begin with the more manifest and go on to learn of immaterial substance.

Book Ten

The subject of this science is being and, since one is convertible with being—whatever is is one and vice versa—Aristotle now turns to the discussion of one. Thomas spells out the development.[17]

Book Eleven

What belongs to the subject of the science, being as being, has now been clarified. Being is said in many ways, but chiefly of substance. It does fall to this science to defend the first principle and, that being done in Book Four, Aristotle in Book Five displays the ordered multiplicity of meanings of the terms that signify the causes, properties, and subject of this science. Having showed how this science differs from all others, Aristotle goes on to show that accidental being and being as true are not instances of that "being outside the

15. # 1770: "Et primo de potentia quae maxime dicitur proprie, non tamen utile est ad praesentem intentionem. Potentia enim et actus, ut plurimum, dicuntur in his quae sunt in motu, quia motus est actus entis in potentia. Sed principalis intentio huius doctrinae non est de potentia et actu secundum quod sunt in rebus mobilibus solum, sed secundum quod sequuntur ens commune. Unde et in rebus immobilibus invnitur potentia et actus, sicut in rebus intellectualibus."

16. # 1771: "Sed cum dixerimus de potentia, quae est in rebus mobilibus, et de actu ei correspondente, ostendere poterimus et de potentia et actu secundum quod sunt in rebus intelligibilibus, quae pertinet ad substantias separatas, de quibus postea agetur. Et hic est ordo conveniens, cum sensibilia quae sunt in motus sint nobis magis manifesta. Et ideo per ea devenimus in cognitionem susbtantiarum rerum immobilium."

17. # 1920: "Superius in quarto huius Philosophus ostendit quod ista scientia habet pro subiecto ens, et unum, quod cum ente convertitur. Et ideo postquam determinavit de ente per accidens et de ente quod significat veritatem propositionis, in sexto; et de ente per se secundum quod dividitur per decem praedicamenta, in septimo et in octavo; et secundum quod dividitur per potentiam et actum, in nono: Nunc in hoc decimo intendit determinare de uno et de his quae consequuntur ad unum."

mind" that is the concern of this science. The treatment of substance, first logical, then in its own terms, seems to be of only material substance, but Thomas reminds us of the telos of the discussion, separated substance. Being is divided by act and potency, and these must be looked into since they are relevant to the ultimate telos, as is the discussion of the transcendental property of being, one. We are ready to undertake the discussion of separate substance but Aristotle prudently reviews the presuppositions of this move, recalling things from the *Physics* as well as from previous discussions in the *Metaphysics*.

In introducing Book Eleven, Thomas emphasizes the structure of metaphysics and its difference from the particular sciences. It is concerned with the *communia entis*, what is found in any being, a range no particular science has, and its telos is knowledge of separate substances that do not fall to any particular science. In recalling what is common to being, we are reminded of what the ultimate aim of this science is: separate substance.[18] It is with that goal in mind, Thomas observes, that Aristotle first gathers everything useful for knowledge of separate substances before going on to discuss them in the following book.[19]

Book Twelve

In what Thomas sees as the culminating book, there is still need for deliberate procedure. Substances are of three kinds, material and perishable, material and imperishable, and immaterial. The intermediate kind, the heavenly bodies, will serve as stepping-stones to knowledge of immaterial substance.[20]

18. # 2146: "Quia particulares scientiae quaedam eorum quae perscrutatione indigent praetermittunt, necesse fuit quamdam scientiam esse universalem, et primam, quae perscrutantur ea, de quibus particulares scientiae non considerant. Huiusmodi autem videntur esse tam communia quae sequuntur ens commune (de quibus nulla scientia particularis considerat, cum non magis ad unam pertineant quam ad aliam, sed ad omnes communiter), quam etiam substantiae separatae, quae excedunt considerationem omnium particularium scientiarum. Et ideo Aristoteles huiusmodo scientiam nobis tradens, postquam perscrutatus est de communibus, acedit ad tractandum specialiter de substantiis separatis, ad quarum cognitionem ordinantur non solum ea quae in hac scientia tractata sunt, sed etiam quae in aliis scientiis tractantur."

19. "Et ideo ad manifestiorem considerationem de substantiis separatis habendam, primo sub quodam compendio recolligit ea quae dicta sunt tam in hoc libro quam in libro Physicorum, utilia ad cognitionem susbtantiarum separatarum. Secundo de ipsis sbstantiis separatis inquirit, circa medietatem sequentis libri [12]."

20. # 2425: "Sed alia substantia sensibilis, scilcet sempiterna, est cuius principia quaerere

As for separate substance, it is important to recall what Platonists and Pythagoreans had to say, so that the alternative to their views is clear. And then Aristotle undertakes to describe the ultimate cause of being as being: Pure Act, Thinking Itself, Goodness, Delight . . . We have reached the highpoint of philosophical theology, those matters on which Thomas confers the title *praeambula fidei*.

The Telos of Metaphysics

It is because one has became demonstratively certain that mobile being requires a Prime Mover that is not another instance of mobile or natural being, and that the human soul continues to exist after death in a manner different from that of mobile beings, that the subject of natural philosophy is seen not to include the full range of extramental reality. A science beyond physics and mathematics thus becomes a possibility. Given the way this possibility is recognized, it will seem that the subject matter of the science we are seeking must be immobile being or substances that exist separately from matter and motion. Knowledge of separate substance is the telos of the new science, but separate substance cannot as such function as the subject of the science, and this for a variety of reasons.

The most important is that our initial awareness of such entities is oblique and dependent on our knowledge of mobile being, of natural substance. We have no direct access to immaterial being. The only path to knowledge of separate substance lies through knowledge of natural substance. The formulation of the subject of the science beyond natural science and mathematics can be seen as the commensurately universal effect of the first causes. The latent desire to know all that exists is no longer the province of natural philosophy since we now know that not everything that exists is material and mobile. But the formulation of the subject of the science we are seeking as being as being, being as such, seems to be merely a more general designation of the things that are studied in natural philosophy. This constitutes the first major methodological problem with the proposed science.

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intendimus in hoc libro; scilicet si unum sit eorum principium vel multa. Hoc enim inquiret considerando de susbtantiis separatis, quae sunt principia moventia et fines corporum caelestium, ut infra patebit. Ponit autem hic large elementa loco principiorum. Nam elementum proprie non est nisi causa intrinseca."

One of the bedrock principles about human knowledge is that things are first known by us in a general or universal way and later and gradually in less and less general ways, with specific knowledge of them the ultimate desideratum. Obviously to know something in general terms is less perfect than to know it specifically. This is not to say that apodictic knowledge on the generic level is impossible. The methodology of natural science as Thomas explains it in his lengthy *prooemium* to the *De sensu et sensato* involves progressively less general apodictic knowledge of the subject matter. Thus, in the *Physics*, the first and most general essay at knowledge of mobile being, scientific knowledge in the sense of the *Posterior Analytics* is provided. For all that, to know natural things only at that general level is imperfect compared to less general knowledge of them. The first and most general and comprehensive expression of the subject of natural science is mobile being. By contrast, the subject of metaphysics is said to be, not mobile being, not quantified being, but just being, being as such, being in general. This clearly seems to be putting a premium on more predicably general knowledge. And presumably predicably more general knowledge of the same things studied by natural philosophy. Thus if the first phase of natural philosophy is less perfect knowledge than later phases, the proposed subject of metaphysics would appear to be an even more general and imperfect grasp. How, then, understand the clearly honorific way of designating it as first philosophy or wisdom?

The solution to this very real difficulty must be sought in the telos of the new science: knowledge of the first causes of all being. The pursuit of this telos will reveal that some substances that exist separate from matter and motion fall within the range of the subject matter of metaphysics. As Book Twelve of the *Metaphysics* will make clear, there is a first cause of the being of every other substance, natural or separate. But this is not something invoked as the subject of the science as first discussed.

Ten ~ METHODOLOGICAL INTERLUDE

It is the task of metaphysics to consider the *communia entis*, that is, whatever can be said of anything just insofar as it is a being, whether material or immaterial. But in what sense can something be common to any and every being? The very term 'being' immediately breaks into a number of meanings and is saved from equivocation only because one of those meanings is controlling of all the others. Thus it is that substance emerges as the sufficient focus for the science of being as being. In considering substance one can be said to be considering obliquely whatever other than substance depends upon it in order to be and to be called being.

This victory over equivocation seems to transpose the original problem onto a somewhat narrower stage. How does the metaphysician consider substance? Does he perhaps take up substance as substance in such a way that what he has to say is applicable to both material and immaterial substance? What must strike any reader of the *Metaphysics* is the way that the "science we are seeking" seems seldom to lift above the terrain that belongs to natural philosophy. The latter considers things that are such that sensible matter is required for their definition as well as in order for them to exist. Metaphysics, by contrast, is concerned not with a "part of being" cut off from the whole, like the subject matters of natural philosophy and mathematics, for example, but with the whole, with being as being. That subject matter is being as being, *ens commune*. If separate substances are not the subject matter of metaphysics, we are left with natural substance. But such substance falls to the purview of natural science. Where is the elusive subject of metaphysics to be found?

In commenting on Book VI of the *Metaphysics*, Thomas introduces this reminder:

> It should be noticed, however, that although things separate from matter and motion both as they exist and as thought about fall to the consideration of first philosophy,

it not only deals with them but also with sensible things. Unless we should say, with Avicenna, the common matters which this science scrutinizes are said to be separate in existence, not because they are always without matter, but because they need not be in matter, like mathematicals. (1165)[1]

Sicut mathematica. Thomas took up elsewhere, as we have seen, this Avicennian suggestion. Moreover, in referring here to mathematics, he refers to a science characterized by what he has called formal abstraction, *abstractio formae*, the form in question being an incidental property of substance. Quantity cannot really exist independently of the sensible qualities of substance, but it can be considered apart from them. By contrast, being and its properties, the *entia communia*, can be considered apart from matter because, while not every being, substance, or act is immaterial, there are substances that exist apart from matter.

This may suggest that we should proceed to discuss substance without reference to its existing or not existing in matter, as if either is incidental to it. But if there is anything that characterizes the *Metaphysics*, it is a dogged concentration on natural substance. The discussion of essence in Book VII is said to proceed *logice*, that is, to consider substance or essence by noting how it is defined. Definition, the parts of the definition—these are logical matters introduced for whatever oblique light they can cast on real being. But it is the essence of natural things and the way it is defined that controls the whole book.[2] Indeed, it can seem that the only candidate for separate substance, the Platonic Idea, is dismissed as based on a misunderstanding. Book VIII takes up a nonlogical discussion of natural substance, that is, one that bears on its

1. "Advertendum est autem quod licet ad considerationem primae philosophiae pertineant ea quae sunt separata secundum esse et rationem a materia et motu, non tamen solum ea, sed etiam de sensibilibus perscrutantur. Nisi forte dicamus, ut Avicenna dicit, quod huiusmodi communia de quibus haec scientia perscrutatur, dicuntur separata secundum esse, non quia semper sint sine materia, sed quia non de necessitate habent esse in materia, sicut mathematica."

2. In its final chapter, Book VII makes it clear that simple substances cannot be objects of scientific inquiry, that is, the subject matter of a science, since any such subject matter has to be complex. Simple things are either wholly known or wholly unknown: ". . . palam est quod in substantiis simplicibus, quae non sunt compositae ex materia et forma, non est aliqua quaestio. In omni enim quaestione, ut habitum est, oportet aliquid esse notum, et aliquid quaeri quod ignoramus. Tales autem substantiae, vel totae cognoscuntur, vel totae ignorantur, ut in nono infra dicetur. Unde non est in eis quaestio. Et propter hoc de eis etiam non potest esse doctrina, sicut est in scientiis speculativis" (*In VII Metaphysic.*, lectio 17, nn. 1669–70).

real constitutive principles. And Book VII ends by showing that of simple substances we cannot have *propter quid* knowledge, since that presupposes complexity in the subject of knowledge. If simple substances cannot be subjects of *propter quid* demonstrations, this can only mean that they are not the subject of the science we are seeking. But this leaves as the subject of the science *ens commune*, and there seems to be precious little interest in it, since, the analogy of "being," leads to the emergence of substance, but it is material or natural substance that is the focus of analysis. There is of course no suggestion at all that there are univocal notes of being or substance that would apply equally to immaterial and material substance. In commenting on that final chapter of Book VII, St. Thomas writes:

> But lest it seem that consideration of such substances is wholly alien to physical doctrine, he adds that there is another manner of questioning them. For we only come to knowledge of such substances from sensible substances, of which simple substances are in a way the causes. Therefore we use sensible substances as things known and through them inquire into immaterial substances. Just as the Philosopher, below, investigates moving immaterial substances via motion. Therefore in the doctrine and questions concerning such [substances] we use effects as the means for investigating simple substances, whose quiddities we do not know. It is also clear that in the order of learning the latter [simple substances] relate to the former [sensible substances] as form and the other causes relate to matter. For just as in sensible substances we seek form, end, and agent as causes of matter, so we seek simple substances as causes of material substances.[3]

Simple substances are not only known from their effects, sensible substances, they are also named from them. So it is that terms whose native habitat is material substance—"substance," "form," and "essence"—are probed for meanings that would make them applicable to nonmaterial things. Needless to say, this extrapolation of terms from sensible things is not in the direction

3. "Sed ne videatur consideratio talium substantiarum omnino aliena esse a physica doctrina, ideo subiungit, quod alter est modus quaestionis talium. In cognitione enim harum substantiarum non pervenimus nisi ex substantiis sensibilibus, quarum substantiae simplices sunt quodammodo causae. Et ideo utimur substantiis sensibilibus ut notis, et per eas quaerimus substantias simplices. Sicut Philosophus infra, per motum investigat substantias immateriales moventes. Et ideo in doctrinis et quaestionibus de talibus, utimur effectibus, quasi medio ad investigandum substantias simplices, quarum quidditates ignoramus. Et etiam patet quod illae substantiae comparantur ad istas in via doctrinae, sicut formae et aliae causae ad materiam. Sicut enim quaerimus in substantiis materialibus formam, finem et agentem ut causae materiae, ita quaerimus substantias simplices ut causas substantiarum materialium (n. 1671)."

of some common univocal meaning. The result of this extrapolation will always be a plurality of meanings, one of which, the obvious one, applies to the things of our experience, and the extended meaning to the separate substances we seek to know.

Perhaps this enables us to address one of the questions that arises when we hear metaphysics commended on the basis of abstraction. It is not rare to hear it said that the consideration of material things "as being" is more profound than the consideration of them as material things. Waiving other difficulties, this suggests that a predicably more abstract grasp of things is more informative than the grasp of such things in their proper principles, a very dubious suggestion. The passages we are looking at make it clear that the telos of the metaphysical effort is to achieve such knowledge as we can of separate substance, of God. The only way such knowledge can be had is through knowledge of sensible things. Thus, while neither simple substances nor *afortiori* God could be the subject of the science, the whole effort is a project in natural theology. The subject matter is fashioned in order to provide a means of arriving at knowledge of its causes.

If there is no univocal meaning of *ens commune* or *substantia* that could cover both material and immaterial things, the knowing and naming of immaterial substances will always require grounding in knowledge of material substances. Thus, when the question comes up as to whether the name of the species signifies the composed thing or only its form, Thomas says the question has little bite for sensible things, since it is manifest that the sensible substance is composed of matter and form. When would the question matter?

> Consequently he manifests how it would matter whether they are thus and so. For it is clear that if there is some thing that is form and act alone, the essence "exists in it" in the way in which soul and to be the soul are the same, that is, the soul is the essence of soul. But if something is composed of matter and form, in it, essence and the thing itself will not be the same, as man and the essence of man are not the same. Unless perhaps he is said to be only soul, as some say that the names of species signify form alone. So it is clear that there is a thing identical with its essence, namely, that which is not composed of matter and form, but is form alone.[4]

This is picked up in the final lesson.

4. "Ad quid autem differat, utrum sic vel sic se habent, consequenter manifestat. Manifestum est enim quod si aliqua res est, quae sit forma tantum et actus, quod quid erat esse 'existit

Similarly, that which is wholly separate from matter, and thus is identical with its essence, as was said above, is immediately one just as it is immediately being: for in it there is no matter expecting form from which it has unity and existence; therefore in such things there is no cause bringing it about that they are one.[5]

Doubtless one can say that, in this effort to extrapolate from composite substance, greater clarity about it is achieved precisely as we make the effort to conceive of simple substance. But we should not be tempted to think that just using the common terms "essence" and "existence" frees us conceptually from the realm of material substance to some grasp common to them and immaterial substances, that is, univocally common. That is why St. Thomas continues:

However immobile substances have a cause of their substance, but not in the way things generable through motion come to be. Right off each of them is some being and some one thing, not such that being and one are genera or existing singly outside singulars, as the Platonists held.[6]

The upshot of such analyses, therefore, is not to find some univocally common notion of "being" or of "one" applicable to material and immaterial substances. Rather, the analysis of the substance most known to us, material substance, provides a springboard to formulate notions applicable to immaterial substances. The extended notions do not give us more profound knowledge of sensible substance, save in the sense already indicated, namely, that the close analysis of sensible substances provides the basis for forming a concept applicable to immaterial substance.

ei,' sicut idem est 'anima et animae esse,' idest anima est quidditas animae. Si vero aliquid est compositum ex materia et forma, non erit idem in ipso quod quid erat esse et res ipsa; sicut non idem est homini esse et homo. Nisi forte dicatur anima tantum, secundum illos, qui dicunt, quod nomina specierum significant formam tantum. Et sic patet, quod aliqua res est, cui idem est quod quid erat esse suum, scilicet quae non est composita ex materia et forma, sed forma tantum" (*In VII Metaphysic.*, lectio 3, n. 1709).

5. "Et similiter id quod est separatum omnino a materia, quod est suum quod quid erat esse, ut supra dictum est, statim est unum, sicut statim est ens: non enim est in eo materia expectans formam, a qua habent unitatem et esse; et ideo in talibus non est aliqua causa movens ad hoc quod sint unum" (*In VII Metaphysic.*, lectio 5, n. 1764).

6. "Habent tamen quaedam causam substituentem substantias sine motu substantiarum earum, et non sicut in generabilibus quae per motum fiunt. Statim enim unumquodque eorum est aliquod ens et aliquod unum, *non ita quod ens et unum sint genera quaedam, aut singillatim existentia praeter singularia, quae Platonici ponebant*" (*In VII Metaphysic.*, lectio 5, n. 1764; emphasis added).

We find this same principle expressed in the treatise on act and potency, Book IX. Of course we must begin with act and potency as these are encountered in material things, but that is not the chief interest of the metaphysician.

> For the most part, potency and act are said of things that are in motion, because motion is the act of a being in potency. But the chief aim of this doctrine is not potency and act as found in mobile things alone, but as they follow on common being. Hence potency and act are found in immobile being and in intellectual things.[7]

But senses of "act" and "potency" that makes these terms applicable beyond mobile things must be grounded in the meanings they have as applicable to mobile things. Again, it is not a matter of having a common meaning that is indifferent to the two applications, since that would entail univocity. The analysis of Book IX relies heavily on extensions of these key terms within the realm of sensible things. It would of course be wrong to think that "act" and "potency" have only univocal uses before the task of metaphysics is undertaken. Thus, the "powers" of the soul and their corresponding acts, as we move from the vegetative through the sensitive and into the intellectual, generates an ordered set of meanings for "act" and "potency."[8] Beings that are sometimes in potency and sometimes actual must be generated and are corruptible. But not all beings are such: those that are form alone are themselves as such beings and are not generable or corruptible.

> Whatever is generated is generated from something: but being absolutely as being cannot be generated from anything. For there is nothing outside being, but only outside a kind of being, as outside man there is some being. Hence, this being can be generated incidentally, but not being absolutely. Therefore, that which is being per se, because it is itself the form on which being follows, is not generable and thus is not sometimes in potency and sometimes in act.[9]

7. "Potentia enim et actus, ut plurimum, dicuntur in his quae sunt in motu, quia motus est actus entis in potentia. Sed principalis intentio huius doctrinae non est de potentia et actu secundum quod sunt in rebus mobilibus solum, sed secundum quod sequuntur ens commune. Unde et in rebus immobilibus invenitur potentia et actus, sicut in rebus intellectualibus" (*In IX Metaphysic*., lectio 1, n. 1770).

8. For example, the distinction between irrational and rational powers: "Manifestum est igitur quod potentiae rationales contrarium faciunt potentiis irrationabilibus; quia potentia rationalis facit opposita, non autem potentia irrationalis, sed unum tantum. Et hoc ideo est quia unum principium oppositorum continentur in ratione scientiali, ut dictum est" (*In IX Metaphysic.*, lectio 2, n. 1793).

9. "Omne enim quod generatur, ex aliquo generatur: ens autem simpliciter inquantum ens,

This relies of course on the resolution of the Parmenidean paradox. Being does not come to be *per se* from being, but only incidentally or *per accidens*. But this solution requires a complexity in being, a complexity of subject and form. It is not the form that becomes another form, but that which had such and such a form that takes on the contrary form. It is water that is potentially warm and actually cold that actually becomes warm. A being that is form alone cannot come to be in this way.

The point I am laboring is the obvious one that the whole structure of metaphysics is ordered to knowledge of the divine.[10] Separate substance, the divine, cannot be the subject of a science and thus can only be known indirectly and obliquely through its effects. Since there is nothing univocally common between material and separate substance, it should come as no surprise that the metaphysician is so occupied with pondering natural or material substance. His aim is not to know such substances as such—the whole effort presupposes this knowledge is already had—but so to reflect upon and analyze material substance that the analysis provides an intimation of the divine. If the aim of philosophical wisdom is such knowledge of the divine as we can achieve, it is no wonder that the effort entails prolonged reflection on the things more directly known to is. This is the burden of the culiminating book of the *Metaphysics*, as we shall now see.

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non potest ex aliquo generatur. Non enim est aliquid extra ens, sed extra tale ens; utpote extra hominem est aliquod ens. Unde hoc ens potest generari secundum quid, sed ens simpliciter non. Id ergo quod est ens secundum se, per hoc, quod ipsum est forma, ad quam sequitur ens, non est generabile. Unde non est quandoque in potentia, quandoque in actu" (*In IX Metaphysic.*, lectio 11, n. 1911).

10. For much the same argument, see Joseph Moreau, "L'être et l'essence dans la philosophie d'Aristote," in *Autour d'Aristote. Recueil d'études de philosophie ancienne et medievale offert à Monseigneur A. Mansion* (Louvain, 1955), 181–204; and Vianney Decarie, "Le livre Z et la substance immaterielle," *Etudes sur la métaphysique d'Aristote. Actes du VI Symposium aristotelicum* (Paris: Vrin, 1979), 167–81.

Eleven ~ THE BOOK OF WISDOM

In what follows, I first provide a continuous paraphrase of what Thomas Aquinas makes of Book XII of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Only with this account before us can we turn to the neuralgic points of the narrative, considering, for example, those turns of interpretation that agree or disagree with what has become received opinion among Thomists on Aristotelian exegesis.[1] The assumption will be that Thomas sets out to provide a reading of the text, a task in which he may succeed or fail. I hold that no one can read his commentary and retain the notion, alas still sometimes held, that Thomas's interest is not so much to understand the text as to use the text for his own purposes, purposes that deviate from the sense of what Aristotle says. For all that, Thomas's reading, like all other readings, contains controversial interpretations. Not infrequently, we find him somewhat at odds with other interpretations, but such disagreements must be settled by appeal to the text itself. No reader can fail to sense the receptive air with which Thomas reads Aristotle. Indeed, one can feel surprise at the way in which Thomas restrains himself from taking exception to Aristotelian assumptions that Thomas cannot share, most notably the assumption that the world is eternal. It seems inescapable that Thomas, finding himself confronted with a philosophical theology uninfluenced by Christian faith, marvels at the achievement even when he finds it necessary to observe that some arguments advanced by Ar-

1. Since the interest of this study is principally the views of Thomists on the relationship between Thomas and Aristotle, my references to the ongoing vagaries of Aristotelian exegesis as such are minimal, and in the following chapter I do not take them into account. Of course, since the assumption of my reading is that Thomas's interpretation of Aristotle is on the relevant matters solidly grounded in the text, a full and satisfying form of the argument would require comparing his account to the readings of Aristotelian exegetes. It is merely as a gesture in the direction of that further task that I refer to some key works of Aristotelian scholarship, for example, to the Symposium Aristotelicum devoted to Book XII. Father Leo Elders' *Aristotle's Theology: A Commentary on Book Lambda of the Metaphysics* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1972) is also of primary importance.

istotle do not succeed in making the conclusion he would draw a necessary consequence of the premises. The chapters of Book XII are a highwater mark in philosophy and in philosophical theology. Indeed, whatever addenda and precisions Thomas makes elsewhere are refinements and developments of what he finds here.

Book Lambda

Lambda (XII) is the telos toward which the previous books of the *Metaphysics* tend as well as the defining telos of philosophy as a whole, a point made in the first prefatory chapters of Book I. Kappa, the immediately preceding book, recapitulates what has been said of imperfect beings, mobile beings, but Lambda too begins with a recapitulation that concentrates on the primacy of substance among the things that are. In the second part of the book, Aristotle discusses immaterial substance and God.

The Nature of Substance

Only substance saves the *ratio entis* completely, that is, *habens esse*. Other things are called being, not because they subsist, but rather because that which subsists, substance, is qualified by them, whether positively or negatively. The accidents of being, things that fall in the categories other than substance, qualify their subject positively, whereas negations signify a lack in the subject. Given the primacy of substance, what has been said about it in Books VII and VIII is recalled and other things will be added that complete the discussion of substance. (2416) It is the aim of wisdom to discover the principles and causes of substance, so the discussion of substance will be complete when the first causes of substance are made known.[2]

Thus it is that Aristotle goes on to distinguish substance into sensible and immobile substance, with the former further subdivided into the corruptible and the sempiternal. Sempiternal sensible substances are the celestial

2. This is the burden of lectio 1 of Thomas's commentary on Book XII. Lesson 1 covers the first two-thirds of Chapter 1, 1069a18–a30. See Michael Frede, "Metaphysics Λ, 1," in *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda. Symposium Aristotelican* (henceforth *SA*), ed. Michael Frede and David Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 53–80. Also see Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, 69–87.

bodies, the corruptible sensible substances are such obvious things as plants and animals. The focus here will be on the sempiternal sensible substances about which we will ask if they have but one principle or many. That question points to the separate substances that are the efficient and final causes of celestial bodies, something that must of course be proved. (2425) If both kinds of sensible substance are manifest, it is by no means clear whether and what separated substances are. Aristotle recalls the Platonic and Pythagorean accounts of separate substance, universals, and mathematicals, respectively. (2426) Sensible substances fall to the consideration of natural philosophy which is concerned with mobile being. But this science considers both.

> Therefore natural science considers sensible substances alone insofar as they are in act and in motion. But this science considers both them and immobile substances, insofar as they agree in this that they are beings and substances.[3] (2427)

But if both sensible and separate substances are called substances and being, this can scarcely be in the same sense, and because sensible substances are the springboard both to knowledge of and to talk of separate substance, sensible substance must first be considered.

The Principles of Natural Substance

Matter is the first thing to be taken up since it is the *sine qua non* of the changes to which sensible things are subject. Change takes place from contrary to contrary, and matter is their subject. Hot does not become nonhot or cold, but that which is hot becomes nonhot or cold. If this were not the case, we would be confronted with the Parmindean criticism that change requires that being become nonbeing and nonbeing become being, thus violating the principle of contradiction. Matter, the subject of change, is what enabled Aristotle in *Physics* I to remove the Parminidean obstacle to the recognition of change and to a science of natural things. In summarizing that obstacle, Thomas notes that it invokes the maxim *ex nihilo nihil fit* (2432). The subject that is actually characterized by one of contraries is potentially characterizable by the other. This is the humble origin of talk of act and po-

3. "Et ideo naturalis scientia considerat solum de substantiis sensibilibus, inquantum sunt in actu et in motu. Et ideo tam de his etiam quam de substantiis immobilibus considerat haec scientia, inquantum communicant in hoc quod sunt entia et substantiae."

tency. But if matter is to be found in all sensible substances, it is not found in all of them in the same way. In sublunary things, matter is a subject that, from potentially having a substantial form, comes actually to have it, the result being a composite substance. On the assumption that celestial bodies neither come to be nor pass away, which of course is the point of calling them sempiternal, matter in them is merely a potentiality to local motion. (2436) Lesson 2 ends with a little treatise on nonbeing.

Since generation is a transmutation from nonbeing to being, one may ask what is the nonbeing from which substantial being comes to be. "Nonbeing" can be understood in three ways. First, utter nonbeing, and this cannot be the prius of substantial generation, "quia ex nihilo nihil fit secundum naturam." Second, there is nonbeing in the sense of a privation, a negation in a subject, and from such nonbeing being comes to be only incidentally or *per accidens*. It is the subject of the privation that comes to be, not the privation as such. Third, matter can be called nonbeing since, as such, it is not actual but only potential being. It is from that which is not in this sense, the matter as potential, that being comes to be *per se*. (2437) The product of change comes *per se* from that which survives as a constituent of it.[4]

The next principle of sensible being considered is form. There are three causes and three principles of sensible being, two of which are contraries, namely, form or species and privation; the third, of course, is matter. Neither matter not form is generated if both are taken in the ultimate sense: "for some matter is generated, namely, that which is the subject of alteration, for it is a composite substance."[5] (2442) That is, while prime matter does not come to be by way of generation, the substance that is the subject matter of accidents is generated. The reason for the denial that ultimate matter or ultimate form is generated is that this would involve us in an infinite regress. (2443)

Continuing this rapid summary, we recall that the generated thing acquires its form from a cause or agent similar to itself, that is, from a univocal cause. Of course, things can come to be by nature or by art or by chance, and these will be differently explained. Natural becoming is from an intrinsic

4. Lesson 2 of Thomas's commentary covers the rest of Chapter 1, all of Chapter 2, and the opening sentence of Chapter 3, viz., 1069a30–b32. See Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, 88–96; and David Charles, "*Metaphysics Λ2*: Matter and Change," in *SA*, 81–110.

5. "Nam materia aliqua generatur; scilicet quae est subiectum alterationis; est enim substantia composita."

principle, whereas art is a principle in an exterior agent, the artisan. But in both cases it can be said that what comes to be comes to be from something similar to themselves ("fiunt ex sibi simile"). (2444) In the case of art, the idea or form in the mind of the artisan is like that which is caused to be in matter. The artifact thus conforms to the maker's idea of it. In natural generation, man comes to be from man. There are other natural causes whose similarity to their effect is not univocal, as when a terrestrial body is warmed by the Sun, the heat effected is not univocally the same as the heat of the Sun. The upshot is that, in both natural and artificial generation, a thing is generated by something similar to itself. As for chance generation, this can be seen as the privation of natural and artificial generation. But then chance and fortune are not *per se* causes of their effects. Thus are the discussions of *Physics* II recalled.

How does form relate to the composite thing that results from generation? The answer to this question depends on the realization that substance can be understood either as matter or as form or as the composite of the two. With respect to some forms, it is clear that they do not exist apart from the composite substance. The form of the house does not enjoy existence independently of the materials of which the house is built. But of course a house is an artifact, and if we think of the form in the mind of the artisan, it exists apart from the building materials. But the coming and going of such ideas is not an instance of generation but of some other mode of becoming.

> But there is neither generation nor corruption of these forms of artificial things as they are in the mind of the artisan. For the house, which in the soul is without matter, and health and other like things, come to be and cease to be in a way other than by generation and corruption, namely, by learning or by discovery.[6] (2447)

This recalling of the difference between the coming into being of natural substances and coming to know, whether by being taught or by way of discovery, is a reminder of the way in which discussions in the *De anima* point to a kind of being beyond sensible substance.

The agent or efficient cause may preexist its effect, but the form or formal cause cannot:

6. "Sed harum formarum artificialium prout sint in mente artificis, nec est generatio nec corruptio. Domus enim, quae est sine materia in anima, et sanitas, et omnia huiusmodi, alio modo incipiunt esse et desinunt quam per corruptionem et generationem; scilicet per disciplinam, aut per inventionem."

But the formal cause that is a cause as the notion [ratio] of the thing, comes to be simultaneously with the thing whose form it is. For health comes to be when a man is healed, and the shape of the bronze sphere when the bronze sphere comes to be.[7] (2450)

But if the form does not preexist that of which it is the form, could it perhaps continue to be after the composite ceases to be? Once more, a crucial reminder arises from this question. There is a form, the intellectual soul, that continues to be after the composite of which it is the soul ceases to be. (2451) This provides an occasion to contrast what Plato held with the truth of the matter. Plato's contention that forms preexist is contrasted in turn with the view of the ancients that a form can neither preexist nor survive the composite, the latter view being a consequence of the failure to distinguish intellect and sense. But Plato's view is rejected only insofar as it involves the preexistence of the human soul. (2452)

Thomas takes this occasion to recall and reject the view that would interpret Aristotle as saying that only the possible intellect or only the agent intellect survives as a single separate substance, not a faculty of this human soul and that.

From this it is also evident that this cannot be twisted, as some tried to do, saying that only the possible intellect or only the agent intellect is incorruptible. Both because they hold that the intellect which they say is incorruptible, whether the possible or agent intellect, is some separate substance and thus it is not a form; and also because if it were form it would preexist body just as it survives the corrupted body. On this point there is not much to choose between those holding an intellect separate from man and those holding that separate species are the forms of sensible things. That is what Aristotle means to exclude there.[8] (2453)

7. "Sed causa formalis, quae est causa quasi ratio rei, simul incipit esse cum re cuius est forma. Tunc enim incipit esse sanitas, quando homo sanatur; et tunc incipit esse figura sphaerae aereae, quando fit sphaera aerea."

8. "Ex quo etiam patet quod non potest hoc depravari, sicut quidam depravare conantur dicentes intellectum possibilem tantum, vel agentem tantummodo esse incorrupitibilem. Tum quia ponunt intellectum, quem dicunt esse incorruptibilem, sive sit intellectus possibilis sive agens, esse quamdam substantiam separatam, et sic non est forma. Tum etiam quia si sit forma, sicut remanet corrupto corpore, ita etiam praeexistit corpori. Et quantum ad hoc non esset differentia inter ponentes intellectum separatum esse formam hominis, et ponentes species separatas esse formas rerum sensibilium. Quod Aristoteles hic excludere intendit."

Thus deftly does Thomas buttress the arguments of his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*. That Aristotle rejects the Platonic separate form, which preexists the composite substance, as the formal cause of the composite, is clear enough. But the Averroistic interpretation of the immortality of the soul as pointing to the existence of a separate incorruptible substance is equally if implicitly rejected, since such a separate soul would preexist the composite and could not be its form.

Lesson 3 ends with a reiteration of the argument that the Platonic invocation of separate forms to explain the coming into being of sensible things is otiose, since in these lower things is found a sufficient cause of the formation of all the things that come to be:

> for the natural agent brings about something like itself; it is a man who generates a man, not the universal the singular, but the singular the singular.[9] (2454)[10]

Are These Three Also the Principles of Beings Other than Substance?

Are the principles of sensible substance the principles as well of the other genera, or do these latter have other principles? If they were the same, the preceding discussions of substance would apply univocally to the other genera. The question focuses on whether the category of relation *(ad aliquid)* has the same as or different principles from substance. This focus is explained by the greater distance relation has from substance than do the other categories, since relation belongs to substance by way of other accidents. For example, equal and unequal, twice or half, applied to substance presuppose quantity; and moving and moved, father and son, master and servant presuppose action and passion. "And this because substance is *per se* existing, whereas quantity and quality are beings in another, but relatives are not only in another but to another."[11] (2457)

What can be said for answering the question by denying that the prin-

9. "Nam agens naturale agit sibi simile. Homo enim generat hominem; non quidem universalis singularem, sed singularis singularem."

10. Lesson 3 covers 1069b32–1070a30, effectively, Chapter 3 of Λ. See Lindsay Johnson, "Formlessness and the Priority of Form: *Metaphysics* Z 7–9 and Λ3," in *SA*, 111–35; and Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, 97–112.

11. "Et hoc ideo, quia substantia est per se existens; quantitas autem et qualitas sunt entia in alio; sed relativa non solum sunt in alio, sed ad aliud."

ciples of substance and the other categories are the same? Two arguments on behalf of the negative answer are developed.

1. The First Argument

If the principles were the same, either these same principles are apart from substance and other genera, or they are in substance and the other genera. The first won't do, since then they would be prior to both substance and the other categories, since a principle is prior to the things of which it is the principle. What is thus prior is more common in the manner of a genus, as animal is prior to man, so it would seem there must be something univocally common to substance and the other categories. This is reminiscent of the Platonic view that universals are principles, and one and being the most common principles of all things.

But neither could it be said that the most common principles of all things are in the genus of substance, or in the genus of relation, or in any other category: "For since principles are homogeneous with the things that are from them, it does not seem possible that substance should be the principle of things as related [*ad aliquid*] or vice versa. Therefore the principles of substance and of the other genera are not the same."[12] (2459)

2. Second Argument

No element is identical with that which is composed of elements, since nothing is the cause or element of itself. The syllable AB has A and B as its elements. This seems to present problems for Plato's principles, since each of the things caused by One and Being are one and being. How show that the elements must differ from the things of which they are the cause? "And that such elements are other than the things of which they are the elements, he proves from this that 'such elements,' that is, one and being, are in the singular things composed of them and none of the things composed of them is in the other. From which it is clear that these elements differ from the things composed of them."[13] But if elements are not the same as the things

12. "Cum enim principia sint homogenea his quae sunt ab eis, non videtur possibile quod substantia sit principium eorum quae sunt ad aliquid, aut e converso. Non igitur eadem sunt principia substantiae et aliorum generum."

13. "Et quod huiusmodi elementa sint alia ab eis quorum sunt elementa, probat, quia 'huiusmodi elementa,' idest unum et ens, insunt singulis compositorum ex eis, nullum autem com-

composed of elements and if the elements of substance and of the other categories were the same, it would follow that none of them would be either in the genus of substance nor in the other genera. But that is impossible, since whatever exists must be in some genus. Therefore, it is not possible that the principles of all things are the same.

3. The Solution[14]

a. That the Intrinsic Principles of All Things Are Proportionally the Same. The discussion concedes that in one way it is true to say that the principles of all things are the same, and in another way, it is not true. Take a case. If the form of sensible bodies were warmth and its privation cold, the matter is that which is potentially either. Matter is a principle susceptible of, potentially, the form and its privation. Such principles are substances only in the sense of being principles of substance, not as being species of a genus. Or take fire as something composed of heat as its form and a proper matter, or water as a compound of cold, a privation, and matter. Then if something came to be by a commingling of hot and cold, the principles would be hot and cold plus their matter, since that which comes to be from hot or cold is different from them. Thus of simple bodies and the bodies composed of them, there are the same principles and elements, but there would be different proximate principles of either. Thus they would have the same principles only proportionately.

Just as if someone should say that the foregoing three, namely, hot and cold and their subject, function in the generation of simple bodies as form and privation and matter, so in any other genus there are three things that function as form, privation, and matter, but they are diverse in diverse genera. For example, in the genus of colors, white is as the species, black as the privation, and the surface as matter and subject. And in the genus of the distinctions of times, light is as species, darkness as privation, air as matter and subject, from which three principles day and night are constituted.[15] (2467)

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positorum ex eis inest aliis. Unde patet, quod et ista elementa differunt ab his quae sunt composita ex eis."

14. See Michale Frede's perceptive discussion in his introduction to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Lambda, in *SA*, 19–25, especially his distinction between "equivocal analogy" and "focal meaning."

15. "Sicut si aliquis dicat quod sicut praedicta tria, scilicet calidum et frigidum et subiectum eorum, se habent in generatione corporum simplicium ut forma et privatio et materia, ita in quolibet alio genere illa tria sunt, quae se habent ut forma, privatio et materia, sed ista diversa

Thus there would be matter and form and privation in each genus, but not the identical matter, form, and privation, so the sameness is only proportional.

B. With Respect to Intrinsic and Extrinsic Causes

By taking into account both the intrinsic and the extrinsic causes, it can be shown that there are four that are proportionally the same for all. It is not only what is intrinsic to things that is called a cause, but also that which is extrinsic to them, such as the moving or efficient cause, and then we must distinguish principle and element, since properly speaking a principle is extrinsic, like the moving cause that is the principle of movement. In the proper sense of the term "element," elements are the constituents of a thing. But both are called causes and indeed principle can in a broad sense comprise both intrinsic and extrinsic causes, as was shown in Book V. But not every principle is an element in the sense of a constituent of the thing. Nonetheless, the foundation can be called the principle of a house as its matter and the soul the principle of man as his form. The moving cause, on the other hand, is a principle but it is not an element of the thing.

Thus then it is obvious that according to analogy, that is, proportion, there are three elements of all things, that is, matter, form, and privation. Privations are said to be an element, not *per se*, but incidentally, because the matter in which they occur is an element: matter existing under one form has in itself the privation of another form. But causes and principles are four when we add the moving cause to the three elements. He does not mention final cause because the end is a principle only insofar as it is in the intention of the mover.[16] (2470)

So it is then that the causes and principles of all things are according to analogy four, namely, matter, form, privation, and the moving cause. But these are not the same in all, but are different in different genera. As was said earlier, species and matter and pri-

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sunt in diversis generibus. Sicut in genere colorum, album est sicut species, nigrum sicut privatio, et superficies sicut materia et subiectum. Et in genere distinctionis temporum, lumen est sicut species, tenebrae sicut privatio, aer sicut materia et subjectum. Ex quibus tribus principiis constituuntur dies et nox."

16. "Sic igitur manifestum est quod secundum analogiam, idest proportionem, tria sunt elementa omnium; idest materia, forma et privatio. Dicuntur autem privationes esse elementum non per se, sed per accidens, quia scilicet materia cui accidit, est elementum. Materia enim sub una forma existens, habet in se privationem alterius formae. Sed causae et principia sunt quatuor, ut addamus tribus elementis causam moventem. Non facit autem mentionem de causa finali, quia finis non est principium nisi secundum quod est in intentione moventis."

vation differ in different things, and the first of the causes, which is as mover, likewise differs in different things.[17] (2471)

Likewise, in the healed, health is as form, illness as privation, the body as matter, and in a building the species of the house is as form, the haphazard heap of materials as privation, the walls as matter and the building art as efficient cause. Thus is principle distinguished into these four. But the four can be reduced to three, insofar as form and mover can be reduced to the same species both in artificial things and in natural things. But this reduction to three does not mean that the form of the mover and of the effect are numerically identical, but only the same in kind or species, so in a sense we are left with four. (2473)

Although the first principles are not the same things in all, they are proportionally the same, nonetheless the first principles of all things are absolutely or simply the same. This claim is sustained by three arguments.

First, insofar as among the four causes spoken of, the mover is the first cause, since it is the mover that causes the form or the privation to be in the matter. But in the genus of movers, it is necessary to come to a first mover, as was shown in *Physics* VIII. But one and the same prime mover is the first principle of all things.

Second, some beings are separable as substances are, and other beings are inseparable in the manner of accidents that can only be in substances. From which it is clear that the first principles of substance are also the cause of all the other genera, not only with respect to the first moving cause, but also with respect to intrinsic causes. For the matter and form of substance are causes of the accidents.

Third, even in the genus of substance we must come to something first, for the first principles in the genus of substance are animate living substances, in the opinion of Aristotle, who holds that the celestial bodies are living substances.

And thus the first principles in the genus of substance, as matter and form, will be soul and body, or even body and intellect and desire, for the soul of the celestial body (if it is animate) would have no other parts of the soul save intellect and appetite. For the

17. "Sic igitur causae et principia omnium secundum analogiam sunt quatuor; sicilet materia et forma et privatio et principium movens. Non tamen haec sunt eadem in omnibus, sed alia in aliis. Sicut enim supra dictum est, quod species et materia et privatio sunt alia in aliis, ita etiam prima causarum, quae est quasi movens, est alia in aliis."

other parts are ordered to the preserving of generable and corruptible bodies. Intellect and desire have the character of moving cause.[18] (2476)

There is another way in which all things can be shown to have the same principles proportionately insofar as act and potency are principles of all things. Of course act and potency are not the same in diverse things because they are found differently in different things. In generable things, the same thing is sometimes potentially, sometimes actually, whereas sempiternal things are always actual. But if the appeal to act and potency differs from the earlier effort to show that the principles of all things are proportionately the same, the two approaches can in a way be reduced to one.

This is what he means when he says that these, namely, act and potency, are reduced to the foregoing causes, because form is act, whether it be separable from the composite, as the Platonists held, or even if it be something composed of both, namely, matter and form. Similarly privation is in a way act, as darkness, or "laboring" (ailing), but matter is in potency because as such it can come under both, namely, form and privation. It is thereby manifest, then, that act and potency come down to the same as matter, form, and privation, and that act and potency are different in different things, not identical in all, but other in different things.[19] (2480)

All Things Have the Same Principles, Not Only Proportionately, but Also Universally

This discussion turns on the meanings of the terms signifying the principles, so that the analogical sameness here can be understood in the way in which Thomas employs analogy as the way some terms are common in a manner different from univocal or equivocal community.[20] The proportional

18. "Et sic prima principia in genere substantiae ut materia et forma, erunt anima et corpus, vel etiam corpus et intellectus et desiderium, nam anima corporis caelestis, si sit animatum, non habet alias partes animae nisi intellectum et appetitum. Aliae enim partes ordinantur ad conservationem corporum generabilium et corruptibilium. Intellectus enim et desiderium habet rationem causae moventis."

19. "Et hoc est quod dicit, quod haec, scilicet actus et potentia, cadunt in praedictas causas, quae sunt forma, privatio, et materia, et movens: quia forma est actus, sive sit separabilis a composito, ut Platonici posuerunt, sive etiam sit aliquid compositum ex ambobus, scilicet materia et forma. Et similiter privatio est quodammodo actus, ut tenebrae, aut 'laborans,' idest infirmum: materia vero est in potentia, quia ipsa secundum se potest fieri sub ambobus, scilicet sub forma et privatione. Sic igitur manifestum est, quod actus et potentia in idem redeunt cum materia et forma et privatione; et quod actus et potentia in diversis uno modo differunt, quia non similiter est in omnibus, sed aliter et aliter."

20. See Frede, "Introduction."

similarity already discussed may be thought to ground this second consideration but it seems clear that Thomas regards that proportional similarity as distinct from the analogical community of the terms involved.

> And the first principles most universally signified are act and potency, for these divide being as such. They are called universal principles because they are universally signified and understood, but not as if these universals were subsisting principles, as the Platonists held, because only the singular can be a principle of singular things, and the universal is principle of an effect taken universally, as man of man. But since there is no universally subsisting man, there will not be any universal principle of universal man, but only this particular of this particular, as Peleus is the father of Achilles, and your father of you, and this letter B of this syllable BA, but B taken universally is the principle of BA universally taken. Thus then principles universally signified are wholly the same.[21] (2482)

Universally considered, the principles are the same for all even though what is designated by them differ numerically. So act and potency taken universally are principles of all things since they follow on being taken universally, but insofar as the things caused are considered less universally, the principles are less universal. There are different causes and elements of things that are not in the same genus, for example, colors, sounds, substances, and quantities, even though these are proportionally the same, as was pointed out earlier. But they can be said to be universally the same with respect to the meanings of the terms employed.

Recapitulation

To ask whether there are the same principles and elements of the genus of relation and quality and the rest, or different principles and elements of them, is to ask about things said in many ways, because of diverse things there are not the same, but rather diverse principles, except in a certain way. The principles of all things are the same according to proportion, as when

21. "Et prima principia maxime universaliter significata sunt actus et potentia; nam haec dividunt ens inquantum huiusmodi. Haec autem dicuntur principia universalia, quia universaliter significantur et intelliguntur; non ita quod ipsa universalia subsistentia principia sint, ut Platonici posuerunt, quia singularium non potest esse aliquod principium nisi singulare; universale enim principium est effectus universaliter accepti, ut homo hominis. Sed, cum non sit aliquis homo universaliter subsistens, non erit aliquod principium universale hominis universalis, sed solum hoc particulare huius particularis, sicut si Peleus Achillis est pater, tui vero, pater tuus. Et haec litera B huius syllabae BA: sed B universaliter acceptum est principium eius quod est BA, universaliter accepti. Sic igitur principia universaliter significata sunt eadem omnino."

we say that in any genus there are to be found what answers to matter, form, privation, and mover, or because the causes of substances are the causes of all things, since if substances are destroyed, the rest are destroyed, or because the principles are act and potency. So there are three ways in which the principles of all things are the same. But in another way the principles are diverse, because contraries, which are principles of things, and matter, are not used univocally, since they are not genera, nor equivocally, so we cannot say they are the same simply, but only according to analogy.[22]

Aristotle's Theology

Divisio Textus

Thomas begins by setting off the remainder of this book from what follows, by saying that Aristotle will first provide his own opinion on immobile substances separate from matter in Lambda and, in the following book, give the opinion of others.

First, he will show that there is an immobile, sempiternal substance (1071b3ff.); then, he will consider the *conditio* of this substance (1072a26ff. [lectio 7]).

There are three parts to the first task: (A) showing that there is an eternal substance (1071b3ff.); (B) discussing a question that then arises as to the priority of act or potency (1071b22ff., in lectio 6); (C) that doubt having been resolved in favor of the absolute priority of act over potency, he proceeds to manifest the truth of what was first shown.

As for the first task, the burden of lectio 5, (i) he shows the necessity of there being an eternal substance (1071b3–11), and then (ii) discusses its nature (1071b12ff.).

(ii), in turn, involves three steps: (a) the eternity of motion requires us to recognize an eternal substance (1071b12–17); (b) such a substance

22. Thomas discusses the whole of Chapters 4 and 5 in Lesson 4, that is, 1070a31–1071b2. See Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, 113–37; Michael Crubellier, "*Metaphysics* Λ 4," in *SA*, 137–60; and Alan Code, "Some Remarks on *Metaphysics* Λ 5," in *SA*, 161–79.

must be act (1071b17–20); and (c) such a substance must be immaterial (1071b20–22).

Here begins the culminating philosophical discussion. What can we know of or say about separate, that is, immaterial substance? The preceding discussion was prefaced by a threefold division of substance, corruptible and incorruptible sensible substance, and immobile substance. The first two are exemplified by plants and animals and the like, and celestial bodies, respectively. As for the third, the first requirement is that we show that there is such a substance.

Aristotle's proof that there is such a substance is now analyzed. Substances are first among beings, as has been shown by observing that if substance is destroyed, all its accidents that are being in an extended sense are also destroyed. But if there were no eternal substance but all were corruptible, it would follow of course that everything would be corruptible, that is, such that it does not always exist. But this is impossible. Therefore, there must be some eternal substance.

Why would this be impossible? Aristotle seeks to prove this by showing that it is impossible for motion itself to come to be *de novo* or wholly to cease to be. That is, motion is eternal. In *Physics* VIII Aristotle argued that motion is absolutely eternal. This in turn follows from the impossibility that time should have come to be and not always have been. If at one time time itself came to be or at some time completely ceased being, then prior to time there would be no time nor any time after it ceased to be. But this it seems cannot be because "before" and "after" imply time, since time is precisely the measure of the before and after of motion. Thus it seems, that on the hypothesis that time is not eternal but absolutely comes to be and absolutely ceased to be, there must be time before and after time itself comes to be or ceased to be. So it does seem that time itself must be everlasting or sempiternal.

Further, if time is a sempiternal continuum, then motion too must be a sempiternal continuum, since motion and time are either identical, as some have held, or time is a property of motion, which is the truth of the matter. Time is the measure of motion, as is clear from *Physics* VI. But it is not just any kind of motion that can be a sempiternal continuum. Only local motion could be such and indeed only circular local motion, as is argued in *Physics* VIII.

What kind of substance must be sempiternal? The answer to that question is developed by stages. First, it must be shown that, for motion to be eternal, there must be an eternal substance that is always moving and acting. That is, if motion is eternal, there must be a substance eternally causing that motion, and that substance must be moving and acting always since, if it were not, but only *could* act and move, then there would not actually be motion. Simply to have the capacity to move does not entail that a thing actually moves, since it could happen that what could move does not actually do so. But such a cause could not explain the eternity of motion. So, in order for motion to be eternal, we must posit some eternal substance that always actually moves.

Aristotle then observes that Plato's sempiternal substances would be insufficient to sustain the eternity of motion. Unless such substances had some principle with the power to cause change, they of course could not do it, and it does not seem that the Forms have such a principle. Forms are taken to be separated universals, and universals are not efficient causes. Any moving or efficient cause is something singular, as was pointed out earlier. So neither such species or forms are sufficient to save the eternity of motion, nor such other separate substances as others hold, namely, separated mathematicals, since mathematicals are not as such efficient causes. But if there is no eternal agent substance, motion is not eternal, because it is such a substance, sempiternal and always actual, that is the principle of motion.

Having shown that the eternity of motion requires a sempiternal substance actually acting, Aristotle next shows that this substance must be actuality. That is why he says that it is not sufficient for the eternity of motion that the eternal substance acts if that substance were in its substance potential. Say we said that the first principle was fire or water, as some of the ancients held, then there could not be eternal motion. For such an agent that has a substance admixed with potency could happen not to be. That which is in potency happens not to be, and thus motion would not be, which is incompatible with the claim, taken to be established, that motion is necessarily eternal. So it must indeed be the case that there is a first principle of motion such that its substance has no potency but is actuality alone.

From this, in turn, it follows as a corollary that such a substance is immaterial, since if it contained matter it would be in potency. It is thanks to its matter that a substance is in potency to other forms. Such a substance must

be eternal if anything else is to be such, namely, time and motion. Therefore it must be actual.

Thomas Aquinas, having carefully set forth these proofs, comments on them. He begins by noting that there can be no doubt that Aristotle holds it to be the case, and necessarily the case, that both motion and time are eternal. Why else would he base his inquiry into immaterial substance on these as probative of the existence of immaterial substance? Nonetheless, the arguments that he gives here for those presuppositions, like those advanced in *Physics* VIII, are not demonstrative, but at most probable. "Unless perhaps they are arguments against the ancient naturalists on the inception of motion, which he intends to destroy."[23] (2497) But Thomas does not seem really to think that this supposition relieves him of the difficulty the text presents to him, and he goes on to show the insufficiency of the main argument Aristotle advances here.

Clearly the argument in the text on behalf of the eternity of time is not demonstrative. If we were to hold that time had a beginning, there would be only an imaginary "before" preceding it, just as if we should say that there is no body outside the world there must be such an outside, only in our imagination. There is no place outside the world even though "outside" seems to suggest place. It is no more necessary that there be time before time begins or after it ceases to be, even though "before" and "after" seem to signify time.

But if the arguments on behalf of the eternity of time and motion are not demonstrative, establishing their conclusions with necessity, nonetheless Thomas surprises us by saying that what Aristotle says of the eternity and immateriality of the first substance can be taken as proved necessarily. How so? If the world were not eternal, as Aristotle supposed it to be, it would have to be caused to exist by something that preexists it. And if that cause were not eternal, it in turn would have to be produced by another. But such recourse cannot go on infinitely, as was shown, Thomas observes, in *Metaphysics* II, so there must necessarily be some eternal substance that contains no potentiality and is therefore immaterial.[24]

23. "Nisi forte sint demonstrationes contra positiones antiquorum naturalium de inceptione motus, quas destrugere intendit."

24. Lesson 5 covers the first third of Chapter 6, 1071b3–22. See Enrico Berti, "Unmoved Mover(s) as Efficient Cause(s) in *Metaphysics* Λ 6," in *SA*, 181–206; and Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, 138–59.

Act Is Prior to Potency

In order to maintain that there must be a first principle of things whose substance is actuality, it must be shown that act is prior to potency. In order for that to be seen, the view that potency is prior to act must be shown to be false. Now potency does seem to precede act, since every agent seems capable of acting, but not every agent capable of acting actually does so. So it seems that potency does indeed precede act.

But to hold this involves one in an impossibility, since if potency were absolutely prior to act, it would follow that at some time nothing would be. For it can happen that what can come to be, at some time has not come to be. So if the first beings were in potency, they would not then of course be in act, and thus no other things would be.

There were some, call them theological poets, like Orpheus and others, who held that the world was "generated from night," that is, from a simple preexistent privation. Furthermore, later natural philosophers, seeing that from nothing nothing comes, held that everything first of all existed in a confusion called Chaos by Anaxagoras, and thus everything was then only potentially, not actually. But from either expression of the claim that potency absolutely is prior to act, an impossibility results. For things that are only in potency, whether wholly in privation or in some confusion, could not be moved so as to come to be actually, unless there were some actually existing agent cause, as the matter in artifacts does not move itself, but is moved by an agent cause, art.

It was because they discerned this that some philosophers held that everything always actually exists, for example, Leucippus, Democritus, and Plato. For they held that motion always existed even prior to the world. According to Leucippus, there were atoms of themselves in motion out of which the world was made. And for Plato, there were elements prior to the constitution of the world that moved in a disorderly way, and later God introduced order into them.

Aristotle would approve of the claim that motion had always been, but hold that this way of making it is defective. For they did not say which motion was eternal nor assign a cause of this motion, but simply told a story that did not assign a cause, and nothing moves without a definite cause. There must always be something that is the cause of motion, as we see now that

some things are moved by nature, or by violence, or by intellect, or by some other cause. So too they should have said what this first cause of motion is like, whether nature, violence, or mind. And it makes a lot of difference which of these is chosen. Nor does it help that Plato held that the principle of motion is something moving itself, namely, soul, since for him soul did not exist prior to the constitution of the world, but came after that disordered motion. It was made at the same time as the heaven, which he held to be animate. Soul could not, accordingly, be the principle of that disordered motion.

In order to establish the needed principle, Aristotle draws on things discussed in Book IX where the view that potency precedes act was shown to be in one way true and in another way not. For act is absolutely prior to potency, but in a given thing that is moved from potency to act, potency precedes act temporally, even though by nature and perfection act is prior.

Even Anaxagoras seems to concede that act is absolutely prior when he says that Mind is the first moving principle. For intellect is a kind of act. And Empedocles who gave strife and friendship as moving causes, and of course Leucippus and Plato, held that motion always was.

The Prime Mover

In order for generation, the passage from potency to act, to be perpetual, there must be a cause of this perpetuity that cannot be numbered among the things that are generated and corrupted. Aristotle identifies this with the circular motion of the heavens. For our purposes, it is the way this perpetual mover calls for a first unmoved mover that must draw our attention.

> Since whatever is moved is moved by another, as was proved in the *Physics*, if the heaven is perpetual, and motion is perpetual, there must be some perpetual mover.[25] (2517)

The proof for the prime mover is borrowed from the *Physics*, so it is introduced in a very schematic fashion.

> In Physics VIII it was proved that, since one cannot go back infinitely in moved things and movers, we must come to some first unmoved mover, since if we came to some-

25. "Cum enim omne quod movetur, ab alio moveatur, ut in physica probatum est, si caelum est perpetuum, et motus est perpetuus, necesse est aliquod esse movens perpetuum."

thing that moves itself, it would still be necessary to invoke some unmoved mover, as was proved there.[26] (2517)

The first unmoved mover will have nothing of potency, since that would be susceptibility to change. How, then, describe this substance? We can see that the procedure is always from the substances most knowable to us. It is because sensible substance, changeable things, cannot be what they are without a cause that is not a member of the set of changing things that we are warranted in speaking of immaterial or separate substance. But these designators are of course negations of features of sensible substance. For all that, a description emerges of this first substance: "*that it is a substance existing per se, and that its substance is act*."[27] (2518)

Divisio Textus

> Having established that there is an eternal, immobile, and immaterial substance, Aristotle now (1072a26ff.) inquires into the condition of this substance, and this in three steps: (A) he discusses its perfection (1072a26–1072b14), the burden of lectio 7; (B) whether there are several such substances (1072b14–1073a13), in lectiones 9 and 10; and (C) its operation (1074b15ff.), in lectio 11.
>
> A, in turn, involves two steps: (i), Aristotle shows the perfection of this substance (1072a26–1072b30), then (ii) he will exclude a contrary position (1072b30ff.).
>
> (i) involves first showing the way in which the unmoved mover moves (1072a26–b30), then the perfection that follows from this (1072b30ff.), first, insofar as it is intelligible, (1072a30–34), then insofar as it is desirable (1072a34–b3), after which he compares the first mover and the first mobile (1072b3–14).

We have now reached the crowning achievement of Aristotle's philosophy, his further discussion of what more we can know and say of the first

26. "Probatum est enim in octavo Physicorum, quod cum non sit abire in infinitum in moventibus et motis, oportet devenire in aliquod primum movens immobile: quia si deveniatur in aliquod movens seipsum, iterum ex hoc oportet devenire in aliquid movens immobile, ut ibi probatum est."

27. "*quod sit substantia per se existens, et quod eius substantia sit actus*" (emphasis added).

substance whose very substance is actuality because it is immune to change and devoid of matter. Further access to the first substance must continue to be dependent on what we know of other things, those now seen as its effects. How does the Prime Mover move? ". . . [I]t is necessary that it should move as the desirable and intelligible do, for only these, namely, the desirable and the intelligible, are found to move without being moved."[28] (2519) It is in the objects of desire and understanding that we will find a way to say something more of the First Cause. By reflecting on the way these move without being moved, we will acquire a powerful means of speaking of God.

Motion is either natural or voluntary, that is, dependent on appetite. In the case of the former, the causes of generation and corruption act in a variety of ways. "In the motion which is according to will and appetite, will and appetite are as moved movers, as is clear from *On the Soul* III."[29] (2520) That reference makes it clear how such further progress toward describing the First Cause as we can make is possible for us. The base for extrapolation shifts from the world of natural change to the life world, and more specifically to ourselves. It is because man is the apex of the natural world, to some degree transcending it, that reflection on our specific activities provides the best springboard to saying further things about the First Cause. It is here that we find the fulfillment of Aristotle's natural theology, the goal toward which philosophy tends from the outset.

The First Mover moves in the way that the desirable does. It is for the sake of it that the heaven, which has been seen to be the perpetual cause of perpetual generation, acts as for an end, such that it is assimilated to it in causing and actualizes that which is found virtually in the First Mover. "For the motion of the heaven does not have the generation and corruption of inferior things for its end, since the end is nobler than that which is for the sake of the end. So it is that the prime mover moves as the appetible does."[30] (2521) Further reflection on our own case sheds further light on this.

28. ". . . necesse est quod sic moveat sicut desiderabile et intelligible. Haec enim sola, scilicet desiderabile et intelligible, inveniuntur movere non mota."

29. "In motu autem qui est secundum voluntatem et appetitum, voluntas et appetitus se habent sicut movens motum, ut patet in tertio *de Anima*."

30. "Non enim est motus caeli propter generationem et corruptionem inferiorum sicut propter finem, cum finis sit nobilior eo quod est ad finem. Sic igitur primum movens movet sicut appetibile."

In the human agent, a distinction must be made between the way the object of desire moves and the way in which the intelligible good does, even though both are unmoved movers. Consider the case of the incontinent man, the subject of the middle books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Such a man is moved by the intelligible good, the good that his reason recognizes as perfective of him, but his lower appetite is moved by that which is delightful according to sense, the apparent good, something good in a certain respect, but not absolutely so. "But there can be no such conflict between the first intelligible and the first desirable. It is necessary that the first intelligible and the first desirable be the same"[31] (2522) Where these are distinct, the distinction depends on a distinction between the real and the apparent good, the latter due to the influence of lower appetite. That being the case, the First Good must be the object of desire of the intellectual appetite, the will. The object of will is seen to be good in itself and since this judgment can, in us, in the incontinent man, be perverted by concupiscence when a sensible pleasure seems good to us and is desired, there can be a divergence between desire and will, between the apparent good and the real good. It is not the case, however, that the object of concupiscence can play a role in our action apart from a judgment of reason. "It is therefore clear that the concupiscible is good only as desired according to the dictate of reason. Therefore it cannot be the first good, but only that which, because it is good, moves desire and is at the same time desirable and intelligible."[32] (2522)

These reflections on the way the First Mover causes as a final cause, as intelligible and desirable *(appetibile),* enable us to say something about the perfection of the First Mover in himself.

Just as there is a coordination among movers and moved things, so is there in intelligible things, since a thing understood can lead on to understanding of something else, as a moved mover in turn moves something else. It was by way of reflection on the realm of movers and moved things that we were able to establish that the First Mover is simple and actual. But the same thing can be established by reflection on the realm of the intelligible. It is clear that

31. "Sed non potest esse huiusmodi diversitas in primo intelligibili et primo desiderabili. Sed oportet quod primum intelligibile et primum desiderabile sint eadem."

32. "Sic igitur patet quod concupiscible non est bonum nisi quod desideratur secundum rationis dictamen. Non ergo potest esse primum bonum, sed solum illud quod, quia bonum est, movet desiderium, quod est appetibile et intelligible simul."

among intelligible things, substance is first: we understand accidents only by having recourse to substance that enters into their definitions. But among substances, the simple intelligible substance is prior to the composed substance, for the simple is included in the understanding of the complex. And among simples, which are in the genus of substance, act is more intelligible than potency, since potency is defined by way of act. This suggests that what is the First Intelligible is a simple substance that is actuality.[33] (2524)

The same point can be made by appeal to what is meant by the appetible: "For that which is prior in the genus of intelligible things is also better in the genus of appetible things, or something proportionally responding to it."[34] (2526) What is the meaning of that last phrase? What is actually understood is in the intellect, whereas the appetible is in things. The thing is not desired as known, though known it must be, but as it exists. The contrast was drawn in Book VI: good and evil are in things. But to continue. Just as the intelligible notion of substance is prior to that of accident, so it is with the goods that answer proportionally to these notions. The best thing will thus be simple substance, which is actuality, which is first among intelligible things: "Thus it is obvious that the prime mover is the same as the first intelligible and the first appetible."[35] (2527)

This identification raises a question. In Book III, among the aporiai, it was said that immobile things do not have the note of end that is linked to the good and the appetible. This difficulty requires that the end, that for the sake of which, can in some way be saved in immobile things. And so we note that there are two ways in which something can be said to be the end of something else. First, as preexisting it, as the medium is said to be the end that preexists falling bodies, and nothing prevents end in this sense from being found in immobile things: "*for something can tend by its motion to participate in some way in the immobile*."[36] (2528) Second, an end can be something

33. Lest this seem identical with Plato's positing the One as the first principle of things, Aristotle distinguishes between the One and the Simple, since the One implies measure whereas the Simple implies the disposition of a thing that is not composed of many parts. (2625)

34. "Nam illud quod est prius in genere intelligibilium, est etiam melius in genere appetibilium, aut aliquid ei proportionaliter respondens."

35. "Et sic manifestum est quod primum movens idem est quod primum intelligible et primum appetibile, quod est optimum."

36. "*potest enim aliquid tendere per suum motum ad participandum aliqualiter aliquo immobili: et sic primum immobile potest esse finis*" (emphasis added).

that does not yet exist save in the intention of the agent, which is the cause of his acting, as health is the end of the healing art. End in this sense is not to be found in immobile things.

The First Mover moves as something loved and there must be something that is first moved by it which in turn moves other things, and this is the first heaven. On the supposition that motion is sempiternal, what is thus first moved is itself sempiternal, sempiternally moved and moving others. To say that the First Mover is loved, rather than desired, is preferable. "It is better to say that he is loved rather than desired, since desire is of that not yet had, and love of what is had."[37] (2529)

That the first moved mover be an instance of local motion is argued for on the basis that change of place does not involve a change of the thing moved in the way in which other kinds of motion do, that is, generation and corruption, growth and decrease, alteration. In all of these there is a change in the thing moved. Only in the case of local motion can we deny that there is change "*in substance, or according to some intrinsic disposition of substance*."[38] (2530) The first motion, circular local motion, neither affects nor effects the First Mover, which is in no way moveable, is incapableof being otherwise, and thus is necessary. Furthermore, the motion of the first moved thing is necessarily in it, but this is not the necessity of violence: "*its necessity is to be good, and its moving is a principle of motion in the manner of the desired and end*."[39] (2531)

This calls for a little disquisition on the modes of necessity. In a first sense of the term, violence involves necessity insofar as the thing cannot not be affected by the impetus of the cause of violence. In a second sense, the necessary is that without which a thing cannot be good *(sine quo non est aliquid bene)* or without which it could not be an end. Thus, food is necessary for the life of the animal or because without it the animal could not perfectly be. In a third sense, the necessary is that which cannot be otherwise but is absolutely and in itself necessary. (2532)

37. "Dicitur autem melius quasi amatum quam quasi desideratum, cum desiderium sit eius quod nondum habetur, sed amor eitam habiti est."

38. "*secundum substantiam, vel secundum aliquam intrinsecam dispositionem substantiae*" (emphasis added).

39. "*sed necessitas eius est ipsum bene se habere, et eius movens est principium motus, scilicet ut desideratum et finis*" (emphasis added).

Thus when the first heaven is said to be moved necessarily, this cannot be the necessity of violence, since in incorruptible things there is nothing outside their nature, a condition of violence. Nor can it be absolute necessity, since the first moved mover is itself moved (*Physics* VIII), but what moves itself has in itself both to be moved and not to be moved. There remains, then, only the necessity read from the end, insofar as without the perpetuity of this motion there would not be a fitting order to the end.

On this principle, the First Mover as end, depends the heaven, both with respect to the perpetuity of its substance and the perpetuity of its motion, and thus the whole of nature depends on it, since all natural things depend on the heaven and its motion.[40] And then Thomas invites us to take note of the implication of all this.

Take note that when Aristotle says that the necessity of the first motion is not absolute necessity, but the necessity that is from the end, this end is the principle he later gives the name God, insofar as assimilation to him is attained through motion: but assimilation to that which is willing and understanding, as he shows God to be, is attained by will and intelligence, as artifacts are assimilated to the artisan insofar as the will of the artisan is fulfilled in them. It follows that the whole necessity of the first motion is subject to the will of God.[41] (2535)

The Perfection of the First Substance

Delightful

He is always understanding and desiring in such a delightful way as is impossible for us, namely, that we be always in that delightful and best disposition.[42] (2536)

The act of knowing and desiring of the first principle is productive of delight, delight being the concomitant of a connatural operation of the one

40. "Ex hoc igitur principio, quod est primum movens sicut finis, dependet caelum, et quantum ad perpetuitatem substantiae suae, et quantum ad perpetuitatem sui motus,, et per consequens dependet a tali principio tota natura, eo quod omnia naturalia dependent a caelo, et a tali motu eius." (2534)

41. "Attendendum est autem, quod cum Aristoteles dicat quod necessitas primi motus non est necessitas absoluta, sed necessitas quae est ex fine, finis autem principium est, quod postea nominat Deum, inquantum attenditur per motum assimilatio ad ipsum: assimilatio autem ad id quod est volens, et intelligens, cuiusmodi ostendit esse Deum, attenditur secundum voluntatem et intelligentiam, sicut artificiata assimilantur artifici, inquantum in eis voluntas artificis adimpletur: sequitur quod tota necessitas primi motus subiaceat voluntati Dei." Here ends Lesson 7 of the commentary, which covered 1072a26–1072b14.

42. "Est enim intelligens et desiderans semper in tali dispositione delectabili, quod nobis est impossibile, scilicet quod semper simus in illa delectabile et optima dispositione."

desiring and understanding. We see the complementarity of the discussion here with that of *Nicomachean Ethics* X. An analogy is drawn between being awake and actually sensing and understanding. Actual sensing and understanding are to the sensed and understood in potency as being awake to being asleep. These actual operations are the measure of the delight we take in remembered experience, a delight that participates in that which accompanies actual sensation and understanding. Memory makes past or future operations pleasant by conferring present immediacy upon them. (2537)

Given that delight consists in actual sensing and understanding, it is clear that intellectual activity is in itself best. For the intelligible good surpasses the sensed good, as the changeless and universal good surpasses the mutable and particular good. Thus the delight that is in actual understanding is more eminent than the delight of actual sensing. Consequently, it must be that the greatest and most perfect understanding bears on the greatest good that confers the maximum of delight. Thus, in the understanding of the First Mover, who is as well the most intelligible, there is maximum delight. (2538)

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If this is the case, it must be acknowledged that there is more perfect understanding and delight in the First Intelligible than in the activities of understanding and desire that bear upon him. It is characteristic of intellect that it understands itself insofar as it assumes into itself and conceives the intelligible in itself: the intellect becomes intelligible by dint of attaining some intelligible object. Therefore, since intellect itself comes to be intelligible by conceiving some intelligible object, it follows that intellect and the thing understood are the same. (2539)

How is it that the intellect attains the intelligible? Intellect is to the intelligible as potency to act, the perfectible to perfection, and just as the perfectible is susceptible of perfection, so the intellect is receptive of its intelligible object. For the intelligible is properly substance, the object of intellect being *quod quid erat esse* (essence: the what that measures exists), which is why the intellect is said to be receptive of the intelligible and of substance. Now anything is actual to the degree that it attains its perfection; so the intellect becomes actual insofar as it receives the intelligible object. In the genus of intelligible things, actually to be is to be intelligible: "hoc autem est esse in actu in genere intelligibilium, quod est esse intelligible." And since anything acts to

the degree that it is in act, it follows that the intellect, insofar as it attains the intelligible, becomes operative, that is, understands. (2540)

Of course material substances are intelligible in potency, not in act; they become actually intelligible because, by the mediation of sense powers, immaterial species are produced by the agent intellect. Such species are not substances, but intelligible species received in the possible intellect. Plato thought that intelligible species were *per se* subsisting, and thus he held that our intellect comes actually to understand when it attains such separately existing subsisting things. But in the opinion of Aristotle, intelligible species of material things are not subsistent things. (2541)

But there is some intelligible substance that subsists *per se*, and it is of that we now speak. The Prime Mover must be an understanding and intelligible substance. It follows that the comparison of the first moved to that first intelligible moving substance is like Plato's account of the relation of our intellect to separate intelligible species, by contact and participation in which actual understanding is effected. The intellect of the first moved thing comes actually to understand by some contact with the first intelligible substance. (2542)

That to which something is ordered as to an end possesses in a greater degree what is had in the seeker ("Propter quod autem unumquodque tale, et illud magis"). It follows that whatever is divine and noble, as understanding and taking delight are, in the intellect attaining, is to be found in a much higher degree in the first intelligible attained. The consideration of it, accordingly, is most delightful and best. And this First Intelligible is called God. If the delight we take in understanding is best, though we cannot have it save episodically, then God who always has what we have sometimes has a happiness that is marvelous. And yet more marvelous if he always has in a stronger sense what we have only episodically. (2543)

God Is Life

God is life itself. This is established by noting that the act of intellect, understanding, is a kind of life, indeed is life in the most perfect sense. Act, as has been shown, is more perfect than potency. Hence the intellect actually understanding lives more perfectly than when it is only in potency, as being awake is more perfect than sleeping. The First Substance, God, is himself actuality. His intellect is identical with his own understanding: "Intellectus

enim eius est ipsum suum intelligere." (Here we have the basis for identifying "Deus est ipse actus" and "Deus est ipsum esse subsistens.") If this were not the case, it would relate to him as potency to act. But it was shown above that his substance is actuality. It follows then that the very substance of God is life, and his act is his life and is best and eternal, which is subsistent as such. No wonder some called God the eternal and best animal, since life appears manifest to us in animals alone. Odd as it may sound, God is called an animal because life belongs to him. From all of which it follows that continuous and eternal life is found in God, because God is identical with his eternal life: he and his life do not differ. (2544)

Having set aside certain ancient views that would attribute imperfection to the first principle, Aristotle observes that the first substance must be incorporeal since, as was shown in *Physics* VIII, there is no magnitude in this first substance that is indivisible. A brief resume of that proof is here offered. Such a substance moves in an infinite time, since the first motion is sempiternal, as has been said. From which it follows that he is of infinite power. Among inferior movers, we see that it is a concomitant of higher power that it extends to a more enduring activity. But no finite thing can have an infinite power. This is the basis for saying that the first substance is incorporeal. It is impossible that there should be an infinite magnitude. Thus, since magnitude is either finite or infinite, it follows that this substance is without magnitude. (2549)

But the first substance is not said to be infinite by way of privation, in the way that infinite belongs to quantity, but is called infinite negatively, insofar as it is not imitated by any determinate effect. It cannot be said that the power of the infinite celestial body, even if in an infinite time it moves inferior bodies, moves otherwise than as a moved mover.

But it cannot be said that there is an infinite power in the celestial body, although it exists in an infinite time, for in it there is no active power of its existence, but only a receptive one. Hence its infinite duration shows the infinite power of an external principle. But in order for it to receive incorruptible existence from an infinite power, there must be no principle of corruption in it, nor any potency to nonexistence.[43] (2550)

43. "Sed non etiam potest dici quod in corpore caelesti sit virtus infinita, etsi infinito tempore esse habeat; quia in eo non est virtus activa sui esse, sed solum susceptiva. Unde infinita eius duratio ostendit virtutem infinitam exerioris principii. Sed ad hoc quod ipsum suscipiat

By way of epilogue, it is shown that, since the First Mover is not subject to local motion, all the other kinds of motion that involve local motion are also absent from him. He is the Unmoved Mover in every sense of the term.[44]

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We will not dwell on the lengthy consideration of the heavenly spheres and the subsidiary immaterial substances involved in planetary motion.[45] The principal upshot of the discussion is that the primacy of the Prime Mover is not affected by such a plurality of movers.

But the first principle "since it is its *quod quid erat esse*," that is, its essence and nature, has no matter, because its substance is "entelechy," that is act, and matter is in potency. Therefore it follows that the first unmoved mover is one, not only in kind, but also numerically.[46] (2596)

It is the continuation of Aristotle's discussion of God that interests us principally.

Divisio Textus

Having established the perfection and unity of God, Aristotle now turns to difficulties that arise concerning the Prime Mover's activity. First, he considers difficulties arising from the fact that this immaterial substance moves insofar as it is an intelligible good and understanding (1074b15ff. = lectio 11); second, insofar as it is a desirable good (1075a11ff. = lectio 12).

The first task is subdivided into two: (1) Aristotle gives the source of two questions concerning the intellect of the first substance (1074b15–17); then (2) he deals with the questions (1074b17ff.).

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incorruptibile esse ab infinita virtute, requiritur quod in ipso non sit principium corruptionis, neque potentia ad non esse."

44. Lesson 8 completes the discussion of Chapter 7, 1072b14–1073a13.

45. See G. E. R. Lloyd, "*Metaphysics* Λ 8," in *SA*, 245–73.

46. "Sed primum principium 'cum sit quod quid erat esse,' idest sua essentia et ratio, non habet materiam, quia eius substantia 'est endelechia,' idest actus, materia autem est in potentia. Relinquitur igitur quod primum movens immobile sit unum, non solum ratione speciei, sed etiam numero."

> The discussion has four phases: (a) the difficulties are set forth (1074b17–21); (b) he adds another concerning the object of knowing (1074b21–23); (c) he then discusses two things needed to solve the difficulty (1074b23–25); (d) he then answers the two questions (1074b25ff.).
>
> The first question is solved (1074b25–29), and then the second (1074b29ff.). The answer to the second question has three phases: (i) first Aristotle answers it (1074b29–34); (ii) then he considers an objection to this answer (1074b34–36); (iii) and he settles it (1074b36ff.), in the course of which he raises three further questions concerning the way the first intellect knows itself (1075a6–10).

The Activity of the First Mover

Having established characteristics of the First Mover, his perfections and uniqueness, Aristotle turns now to a discussion of God's action. It has already been proved that the first immaterial substance moves in the manner of an intelligible object and of a desirable good. The assumptions of that will now be examined further.

Certain difficulties to the claim are introduced, first bearing on the description of God as an intelligible good and as an intellect, second bearing on the description of him as an appetible good.

That such difficulties should arise is reasonable enough. Aristotle has argued that an intellect that understands and desires the First Mover thereby shows that there is something more worthy, namely, that which is known and desired. It was further shown that the first intelligible is himself intellect. But doesn't this suggest that there must be something more worthy, namely, what the first intellect understands? And what then would be the meaning of calling him first?

Questions emerge from these difficulties. What is the relation of the First Intellect to his act of understanding and how does he relate to the object of his understanding? As for the first, it would seem that there are three ways that intellect can be related to its own activity: it may understand only potentially and not actually; it may be actually understanding; or it may be identical with its act of understanding. (2601)

The first possibility, that the first intellect *could* understand, that is, understands only potentially, does not suggest the noble, since in the case of

intellect actual understanding is the source of nobility. Knowing potentially, even if this were a matter of having a habit of science and not using it, compares to actual knowing as sleep does to waking. The sleeper can of course awake and do the deeds of one awake, but there is a kind of moral egalitarianism of those asleep, the difference between the virtuous and vicious no longer apparent in deeds.

As for the second possibility, that the first intellect actually understands, but that a distinction can be drawn between this intellect and its activity, this will not do either. This activity is its principal good and if it is distinct from intellect, if intellection were not his very substance, then intellect would relate to it as potency to act, as perfectible to perfection. And then the first intellect is not the best substance; goodness and honorability would attach to him derivatively from his activity, so he would not himself be best and most honorable. (2602)

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Before addressing that difficulty, Aristotle raises another, this having to do with what it is the first intellect understands. What is the object of his understanding? This question must arise whether or not the first intellect is said to be in potency to his understanding or substantially identical to it. Is it himself he understands, or something else? If something else, does he always understand the same thing, or now one thing, now another, sometimes this, sometimes that? (2603)

But first an allied question must be put. Does the nobility and perfection of intellect depend upon whether it understands something good or noble, or would it matter if the object were just anything? That it does matter seems clear. It would be odd to the point of absurdity to say that one should meditate upon, that his intellectual activity should bear upon, vile things. This suggests that the nobility of intellect derives from the nobility of its object, so it is not a matter of indifference that it might bear upon the vile. Activities or operations, after all, are specified by their objects, so the more noble the object, the more noble the understanding. (2604–5)

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In search of an answer to this, Aristotle mentions several things that seem necessary for a satisfactory answer. If as the immediately foregoing suggests, it matters whether intellect has the good, rather than any chance thing, for

its object, and if the First Intellect is most noble, its object must be the most divine and honorable object. (2606) Further, the question has been partly answered when it was asked whether the First Intellect thinks now this, now that, since when it understands the most divine object and then turns to another, this change would be for the worse. What is more, to pass from one object of understanding to another, is a kind of motion, and thus does not seem befitting to the First Intellect. (2607)

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And now the solution to the questions raised. And first of the first. If the first intellect were not identical with his act of understanding, if that activity were not identical with his substance, but his intellect were somehow potential in its regard, it would seem to follow that continuous intellectual activity would be an effort. That which is in potency to something is also susceptible of its opposite, since what can be can also not be. So if the substance of the first intellect compared to actual understanding as potency to act, then he could be said to be capable of understanding as well as of not understanding. So it would not be essential *(ex sua substantia)* that he continuously understands. (2608) Unless we are to think of him as sometimes like one sleeping, it is necessary that the continuation of understanding is received from something else. But what something has received it does not have of its very nature, and it seems probable that this would involve an effort, going by our own case, for it takes an effort for us to keep up an activity. Probable, but not necessary, since what one acquires from another does not involve effort unless what is acquired goes contrary to one's nature. That is why, although the movement of the heaven depends on something extrinsic to it, heavenly movement does not involve an effort. (2609) Thomas's remark about this is interesting.

> Aristotle was content here to show the unfittingness of what probably follows, because the unfitting consequence is necessarily manifest, namely, that the good and perfection of the prime mover should depend on anything higher, for then it would not be first and best.[47] (2610)

47. "Fuit igitur Aristoteles hic contentus inducere ad inconveniens quod probabiliter sequitur; quia inconveniens quod ex necessitate sequitur est manifestum, scilicet quod bonum et perfectio primi moventis dependeat ab aliquo superiori; non enim esset primum et optimum."

And now the solution to the second question. Having shown that the substance of the first intellect is not the potentiality to understand, but is the act of understanding, it is pretty clear that if the First Intellect does not understand himself, but something else, it would follow that something other was more worthy than the first, that is, what is understood by him. (2611) Here is the proof.

For the intellect to be in act, to be actually understanding, is compatible with understanding something unworthy. But then actual understanding should be avoided since it is worthier that certain things not be actually seen than that they be seen. This would not be the case with the best understanding, for then no understanding would have to be avoided. But if some act of understanding should be avoided because of the unworthiness of the intelligible object, it follows that its nobility, which consists in understanding, depends on the nobility of the thing understood. And what is understood is then worthier than the act of understanding. (2612)

But, having shown that the first must be identical with his actual understanding, it follows that, if he understands something other than himself, that other must be more noble than he. But he is the most noble and most powerful. That is why it is necessary that he should understand himself, and that in him intellect and its object be the same. (2613)

It should be noticed that the Philosopher intends to show that God understands, not another, but himself, insofar as the understood is the perfection of understanding and of him whose understanding it is. But it is manifest that nothing other could thus be understood by God so as to be the perfection of his intellect. Nor does it follow from this that all other things are unknown by him, for in understanding himself, he understands all other things.[48] (2614)

And Thomas goes on to argue for that point. Of course, it was this discussion of the divine knowledge that was listed among the *errores Aristotelis*. He begins by recalling that in God there is identity of his substance and his activity *(ipse sit ipsum suum intelligere),* and God is most worthy and power-

48. "Considerandum est autem quod Philosophus intendit ostendere, quod Deus non intelligit aliud, sed seipsum, inquantum intellectum est perfectio intelligentis, et eius quod est intelligere. Manifestum est autem quod nihil aliud sic potest intelligi a Deo, quod sit perfectio intellectus eius. Nec tamen sequitur quod omnia alia a se sint ei ignota; nam intelligendo se, intelligit omnia alia."

ful, so his understanding must be most perfect, and that is why he perfectly understands himself.

To the degree that some principle is more perfectly understood, to that degree its effect is more understood in it, for what derives from principles is virtually contained in the principles. Therefore, since the heavens and the whole of nature depend on the first principle that is God, as has been said, it is clear that God in knowing himself knows all things.[49] (2615)

As for the difficulty seemingly posed by the intellect's having vile things for its object, it is given short shrift by Thomas. Such knowledge is to be shunned only if one were to dwell on the vile *(in eo sistit)* and be distracted from considering worthier objects. Of course, he could have said much more, invoking the maxim that truth and falsity are in the mind, and good and evil in things. (2616)

Objections to these arguments can be raised, and Aristotle takes up two of them. The First understands himself and is substantially one with his activity of understanding, but that entails that the understanding of the First is nothing other than the understanding of understanding. But in our case, such acts as sensing and knowing and opinion and meditation have objects other than those activities. Even when they sometimes bear on themselves, as when one senses he is sensing, or knows that he knows, or thinks that he thinks, or meditates upon himself as meditating, these are not the first and principal objects of such activities. The principal acts of these capacities bear on the intelligible object. Hence the difficulty. "That someone understands himself to understand as intelligible seems to be beyond the principal act, a certain accessory of it. Hence if the understanding of the first intelligence were only the understanding of understanding, it would seem to follow that his understanding is not the most principal thing."[50] (2617)

The second objection arises from the fact that understanding and being understood differ, they get different accounts. Even if we should say that

49. "Quanto autem aliquod principium perfectius intelligitur, tanto magis intelligitur in eo effectus eius: nam principiata continentur in virtute principii. Cum igitur a primo principio, quod est Deus, dependeat caelum et tota natura, ut dictum est, patet quod Deus cognoscendo seipsum omnia cognoscit."

50. "Quod autem aliquis intelligat se intelligere intelligible, hoc videtur esse praeter principalem actum, quasi accessorium quoddam. Unde si intelligere primi non sit nisi intelligentia intelligentiae, videtur sequi quod suum intelligere non sit principalissimum."

the intellect and its activity are in the same subject, they still mean different things *(non tamen sunt idem ratione)*. If, then, the First is his understanding as well as what is understood (what is best), a doubt lingers as to how he is taken to be best, insofar as he is actually understanding or insofar as he is what is understood. (2618)

In response to these objections, Aristotle notes that it can happen that the known object can be one with the knowing of it. Think of the distinction between theoretical and practical knowing. In the making sciences, the thing known apart from sensible matter is the very knowledge, in this sense that the idea of a house in the mind of the artisan is the building art, just as the idea of health in the physician's mind is the medical art. "And thus it is clear that the making art is nothing other than the substance of the thing made, and the measure of its existence. For every maker proceeds to the work from this that he considers the what of the work he intends."[51] (2619) And in the speculative sciences is it clear that the definitive notion of the thing is the thing known, and is the knowledge or understanding: one comes to know insofar as the intellect grasps the nature of the thing *(habet rationem rei)*.

> Since then the intellect in act and the thing understood do not differ, in these there is no matter whatever, it is obvious that in the first substance which is maximally remote from matter there is a maximal identity of understanding and the understood. And thus there is only one understanding of what is understood, and understanding is not other than what is understood, nor understanding different from intelligence.[52] (2620)

Aristotle raises yet another objection to his position. If the First Intellect is said to understand himself, the question arises as to the kind of knowledge involved. That is, our intellectual acts can be distinguished into simple and complex, the first bearing on what the thing is, the second combining such grasps into affirmations and denials, which, unlike the first, are susceptible of truth or falsity. Which of these kinds of knowing is being attributed to the

51. "Et sic patet quod ars factiva nihil aliud est quam substantia rei factae, et quod quid erat esse eius. Omnis enim artifex procedit in opus ex eo quod considerat quid est quod operati intendit."

52. "Cum igitur intellectus in actu et intellectum non sit alterum, in his quaecumque materiam non habent, manifestum est quod in substantia prima, quae maxime remota est a materia, maxime idem est intelligere et intellectum. Et sic una est intelligentia intellecti tantum, et non est aliud intelligentia intellecti, et aliud intelligentia intelligentiae."

First Intellect when it is said that he knows himself? Could God's knowledge be complex? (2621)

A number of reasons are brought against understanding God's knowledge as complex. First, any complex understanding has parts, which can be separably understood. The understanding expressed in "Man runs" is one affirmation, but its parts can be separately thought of. Man as such can be thought of, and so can running itself. So any complex understanding can be transmuted into understanding its parts separately. And the implications of this run afoul of what has been established about the First Intellect. (2622)

Second, whatever lacks matter is simple and indivisible; but the First Intellect is immaterial; therefore it is simple and indivisible. This might be illustrated by invoking the human intellect (2624), but Thomas prefers an illumination that stresses the dissimilarity of our intellect and God's. And the crucial point is then that we receive our understanding in dependence on material things, something not true of God.

Third, the understanding of complex intelligibles has its perfection in time, and is not always.

> Which is evident thus, because it does not have its good in this part or that, but that which is best in him is something else, that is, in some whole. Hence the true (which is the good of intellect) is not found in the incomplex. But simple things are prior in generation and time to composites, hence that which does not have its good in parts, which can be taken singly, but in the whole which is constituted of them, has its good for a time but not always.—But the understanding of the First, which is of himself, is eternally and always in the same way: the complex is not what is understood by the First.[53] (2626)

53. "Quod sic patet, quia non habet suum bonum in hac parte vel illa: sed illud quod est optimum eius, est quoddam aliud, quod est in quoddam toto. Unde etiam verum (quod est bonum intellectus) non est in incomplexis, sed in complexo. Simplicia autem priora sunt generatione et tempore quam composita: unde illud quod non habet suum bonum in partibus, quae seorsus accipi possunt, sed in toto, quod ex eis constituitur, habet suum bonum per aliquod tempus, et non semper.—Sed intelligentia primi, quae est suiipsius, aeternaliter et eodem modo se habet: intellectum ergo primi non est compositum." Here ends Lesson 11, Thomas's reading of Chapter 9, viz. 1074s15–1075a10. See Jacques Brunscwig, "*Metaphysics* Λ 9: A Short-Lived Thought-Experiment?" in *SA*, 275–306; and Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, 248–68. See as well Thomas DeKoninck, "La pensée de la pensée chez Aristote," in *La question de Dieu chez Aristote et Hegel*, ed. Thomas DeKoninck and G. Planty-Bonjour (Paris, 1991), 69–151.

God as the Good of the Universe

Having discussed the way in which God is understanding and intelligible, Aristotle now speaks of the way in which God is good and appetible. After giving his view of the matter, he will contrast it with the views of others.

Divisio Textus

> The Prime Mover is at once understanding and what is understood; he is also the good and desirable. First, Aristotle gives his own opinion of good in the universe (1075a11–25), (a) posing the question (1075a11–13); (b) then arguing that there is a separate good of the universe (1075a13–15), as well as (c) the good which is its own order (1075a16–25); second, he discusses what others have said.
>
> With regard to the opinions of others, he first considers the view that the principles are contraries (1075a25ff.), and then, after Lambda, the views of those who say the principles are some separate natures. For the moment, he will show the absurdities that follow from saying the principles are contraries, a discussion that continues to the end of the Book 12.

It has been said earlier that the Prime Mover moves as the good and appetible move, that is, as a final cause. But good, insofar as it is the final cause of something, can be taken in several ways. The good can be something extrinsic to that which is ordered to it, as we say that a place is the end of that which moves toward that place. But there is also a good intrinsic to the thing, as the form of generation and alteration, for this good, once acquired, is the intrinsic good of that of which it is the form. The form of some whole, which is one thanks to the ordering of the parts, is its order and its good. (2627) So the question before us is whether the nature of the whole universe has a good and best, that is, a proper end, as something separate from it, or whether its good and perfection is in the order of its parts, in the way in which the good of any natural thing is its form. (2628)

The answer is that the universe has both a good separate from it and also the good of order:

There is a certain separate good that is the Prime Mover on whom depend the heavens and the whole of nature, as on an end and appetible good, as has been shown. And

because all things whose end is the same should come together in the order to the end, it is necessary that in the parts of the universe an order should be found, and thus the universe has both a separate good and a good of order.[54] (2629)

Because the whole order of the universe is for the sake of the Prime Mover, that ordered universe is the expression of what is in the intellect and will of the First Mover (2631). The natures of things are inclinations to the good of the universe placed in them by the Prime Mover *(indita ei a primo movente)* and this is true even of things that do not knowingly order themselves to the end (2634).[55]

Thomas brings his explication of these remarkable pages to an end with a summary remark.

So it follows that the whole universe is one principality and one realm, and thus must be ordered by one governor. And that is what he concludes, that there is one prince of the whole universe, namely, the Prime Mover, the First Intelligible, the First Good, which he has earlier called God, who is blessed forever and ever. Amen.[56] (2663)

That is, the God of Aristotle, knowledge of whom is derived from knowledge of the things around us and who is magnificently described in his perfection and operation by an examination of human intellection, is the same God Thomas worships as a Christian and who, through revelation, has made known to us things about himself undreamt of in philosophy. It is because those mysteries of faith involve *praeambula* that Christian theology, however formally different from philosophy, cannot flourish independently of it. No wonder then that the Church should be the sponsor and adoptive parent of natural theology, of the *praeambula fidei*, as, in these dark days, She seems to be almost the sole defender of the range of natural reason, both theoretical and practical.

54. "Est enim aliquod bonum separatum, quod is primum movens, ex quo dependet caelum et tota natura, sicut ex fine et bono appetibili, ut ostensum est. Et quia omnia quorum unum est finis, oportet quod in ordine ad finem conveniant, necesse est quod in partibus universi ordo aliquis inveniatur; et sic universum habet et bonum separatum, et bonum ordinis."

55. Thomas's final lesson on Λ, Lesson 12, covers Aristotle's Chapter 10, 1075a11–1076a4. See David Smedley, "*Metaphysics* Λ10," in *SA*, 327–350; and Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, 269–95.

56. "Unde relinquatur quod totum universum est sicut unus principatus et unum regnum. Et ita oportet quod ordinetur ab uno gubernatore. Et hoc est quod concludit, quod est unus princeps totius universi, scilicet primum movens, et primum intelligible, et primum bonum, quod supra dixit Deum, qui est benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen."

Twelve ~ *SED CONTRA*

Some of my fellow Thomists have taken exception to Thomas's reading of Aristotle's theology in a number of ways.[1] Sometimes we are told that what Thomas says in his commentaries does not represent his own thought, but merely that of Aristotle. At other times we are told that what Thomas says in such commentaries represents his own thought, and not that of Aristotle. The second view is the more interesting, if only because it is susceptible of testing. The test consists in asking whether what Thomas makes of Aristotle's text is actually the meaning of that text.

1. The Eternity of the World

It will escape no one's attention that, in reviewing the way in which Aristotle established the existence of a first eternal substance by appeal to the eternity of time and motion, Thomas criticized Aristotle's argument, characterizing its premises as being at best probable. For all that, he thinks the conclusion follows even more obviously from the assumption that the world is not eternal, something Thomas of course as a Christian believes to be the case. Nonetheless, he does not agree with those who would dismiss Aristotle by saying that his opinion that the world is eternal involves incoherence and self-contradiction. Thomas's own position is that, *philosophice loquendo,* neither the eternity nor the noneternity of the world can be definitively established. The noneternity of the world is a truth of faith, not of reason.

1. Michael Frede, "Introduction," 5ff., questions Ross's description of Book XII as "Aristotle's Theology," and goes on in such a way that the puzzle introduced by Jaeger as to whether or not metaphysics is a special or general science is rendered unintelligible. If "theology" is taken to have the divine as its subject matter, it is simply not an Aristotelian possibility (cf. Book VII, 17). Frede makes clear that immaterial substance is, from a methodological point of view, a function of sensible substance. It is only as cause of the latter that the former can enter in. That, of course, is precisely St. Thomas's understanding of philosophical theology, "function" being understood *quoad nos*, of course.

One might imagine that this discussion would disturb the view that Thomas is less than personally engaged in the reasoning of the text he explicates. Holders of the second view have taken this criticism of Aristotle's proof to conceal a radical misunderstanding of Aristotle. Thomas, it is well known, does not think that one who holds that the world is eternal is thereby committed to denying that it is created. But if there is any received opinion among contemporary Thomists (with of course laudable exceptions) in the matter, it is that the world of Aristotle is not, and cannot be, a created world. Let us first look at Thomas on the way in which an eternal world can be a created world.

In his polemical opusculum *De aeternitate mundi contra murmurantes*, Thomas first sets aside the position that there could be an eternal uncreated world, a position that collides with the teaching of "philosophers who maintain and prove that whatever in any way exists must be caused by him who fully and most truly has existence."[2] If an eternal world were held to be impossible, then, this would have to be because God could not create it. This in turn seems to call into question God's omnipotence. Still, if one says that God could create an eternal world, the question arises as to how such a world could be said to come to be.

Faith apart, there are two sources of the rejection of an eternal world: the denial can stem from the nature of passive potency, or from the belief that an eternal world makes no sense. As for the first, of an angel we can say that before it came to be, no passive potency preceded his existence. That is, there was nothing that could be but was not actually the angel; this follows from the fact that an angel is an immaterial being. Nonetheless, God created angels, so lack of a prior passive potency seems not to tell against the possibility that God made something that always was.

The second reason for rejecting the possibility of an eternal world is that it is conceptually incoherent. Thomas notes that some have held that God could have created an eternal world despite this incoherence, but that involves a false understanding of the divine power. If an eternal world amounts to a nullity, then it would follow that God could not create it. But is an eternal world unthinkable? If it is a coherent notion, Thomas holds that God

2. This little work can be found in *Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. Ralph McInerny (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 710–17.

could have created an eternal world. The question remains: "Whether or not to be created by God in its complete substance is incompatible with not having a beginning of its duration." One might hold that the efficient cause must precede its effect, and thus an eternal world is impossible, or one might hold that nonexistence must precede existence, which is why God is said to create *ex nihilo*. It is this second claim that is of interest to us now.

Thomas invokes the authority of St. Anselm in rejecting the second claim.[3] Imagine that the relation to nothing is taken positively, "in this sense that for the creature to be made from nothing means to be made after nothing, the preposition 'after' implying an order absolutely." But we must distinguish between the order of duration and that of nature. In the second sense, "it would not be necessary that from the fact that the creature is said to exist after nothing that *nothing* should have been prior in duration and afterwards there was something. It suffices that nothing is prior to being in nature. That in a thing that belongs to it of itself is prior to that which it owes to another. But existence is something the creature has only from another; considered as left to itself it is nothing. Thus in the creature nothing is naturally prior to existence." The world, that is to say, if left to itself, apart from its first cause, would be nothing.

Thus one could say of Aristotle's eternal world that, were the Prime Mover to be removed, it would be nothing. And in this sense it is a created world, that is *ex nihilo*. One could say it, but does the text of Aristotle support the claim?

In questioning the argument for the eternity of God that relies on the eternity of the world, Thomas says that the same conclusion would follow even if the world is not eternal. (2499) But, since he does not regard the noneternity of the world as something that could be philosophically established, we are left with a disjunctive premise: whether or not the world is eternal, there is need for a First Cause. And, whether or not the world is eternal, the

3. "He writes [in *Monologion 8*], 'The third interpretation of saying something is made from nothing is when we understand it to be made and yet there is nothing from which it was made. Something similar in meaning seems involved when a man grows sad without cause and it is said that nothing saddens him. On this understanding, remembering what was said above, apart from the highest essence, all the things that are from him are made from nothing, that is, not from something else. There is nothing absurd in that.' On this exposition what is made is not ordered to nothing, as if, prior to its being, nothing existed and only afterwards something exists" (714).

world is totally dependent on a First Cause, and thus created. Is this compatible with the text of Aristotle? Guido Mazzotta suggests a distinction between an absolute beginning and creation:

> To unmask the paralogism it suffices to have an idea of absolute beginning that is certainly a rational idea and does not suppose the idea of creation. This dialectical leap, which comes to light in the commentary on the *Physics*, shows as well the speculative fecundity of the distinction and separation between the idea of an absolute beginning of the world and the idea of radical ontological dependence, or the idea of creation.[4]

The distinction between "absolute beginning" and "creation" suggests that one could have the former without the latter. However that may be, Mazzotta wishes to distinguish between what Aristotle means by act *(energeia)* and what Thomas means by being *(esse)*. Before considering that, it should be pointed out that Aristotle's remark that the heavens and the whole of nature depend on the Prime Mover would seems to characterize Aristotle's world as created, given Thomas's understanding of the term. Mazzotta is aware of this, and of parallel texts, and even notes the occurrence of the phrase in the *Paradiso*, Canto 28, lines 41ff. Apparently, he does not regard this as ontological dependence. Can he make this case?

2. God as Pure Act

In the *De aeternitate mundi*, Thomas dismisses the notion of an uncreated eternal world by appeal to the philosophical principle that whatever exists must depend on a First Cause who most truly has existence. Is Aristotle's Prime Mover such a First Cause? "It follows therefore that there must be some first principle of motion such that its substance is not in potency, but is act alone."[5] (2494) Later, at n. 2518, referring back to this argument, Thomas

4. "Per smascherare il paralogismo basta avere l'idea di inizio assoluto, ch'è idea certamente razionale e non suppone l'idea di creazione. Questo salto dialettico, messo in luce nel commento alla *Fisica*, mostra anche la fecondità speculativa della distinzione e separazione tra idea di inizio assoluto del mondo e idea di dipendenza ontologica radicale, ossia l'idea di creazione"; see Guido Mazzotta, *Teologia Aristotelica e Metafisica dell'essere* (Rome: Urbania University Press, 2000), 36. This little book, subtitled *Ermeneutica tomista di Metafisica Lambda*, provides a convenient point of reference for the present discussion since Mazzotta provides both a translation and a commentary on Thomas's reading of Book XII of the *Metaphysics*.

5. "Relinquitur ergo, quod oportet esse aliquod primum principium motus tale cuius substantia non sit in potentia, sed sit actus tantum."

writes: "If, however, the Prime Mover is sempiternal and unmoved, it is necessary that he not be a being in potency (because it is the nature of what is in potency alone to be moved), but that it be a *per se* existing substance and that its substance is act. Which is what he concluded above."[6]

Mazzotta questions this reference, suggesting that the only potency that has been excluded is that which would make the First Mover movable, so that Thomas is making Aristotle mean more than he said. Indeed, he invokes Thomas himself against this reading of Aristotle, referring to *Q. D. de potentia*, q. 3, a. 17.[7] The text distinguishes between two types of consideration, one that considers the *exitus universi a Deo*, and another that considers *aliquod agens incipere operari per motum*. Well, as Thomas would put it, *diligenter consideranti*, this passage cannot serve Mazzotta's purpose, which is to contrast Aristotle's elimination of all potency for motion from the Prime Mover, and Thomas's elimination of potency on every level and every order of consideration. In commenting on Aristotle here, Thomas is said to perform *una radicaliizzazione metafisica* that enables him to describe the Prime Mover as *substantia per se existens*. The text from the *De potentia* is discussing various ways in which the world has been argued to be eternal. Aristotle is brought forward as arguing that motion cannot have a temporal beginning since every motion presupposes a previous thing that is actually what it is and potentially what it becomes. In short, an infinite regress in this line seems inescapable. If that were all, if such an eternal world were taken to be just there, requiring no further inquiry, of course Aristotle would not have argued for a Prime Mover and the impossibility of an infinite regress of moved movers. When he does that, he is discussing the *exitus universi a Deo*. So this text will not serve Mazzotta's reading of Lambda that would have Aristotle speaking on the level of motion and Thomas on the level of being.

6. "Si autem primum movens est sempiternum et non motum, oportet quod non sit ens in potentia (quia quod est in potentia tantum natum est moveri), sed quod sit substantia per se existens et quod eius substantia sit actus. Et hoc est quod supra concluserat."

7. "Aristoteles vero, considerans quod si ponatur causa constituens mundum agere per motum, sequeretur quod sit abire in infinitum, quia ante quemlibet motum erit motus, posuit mundum semper fuisse. Non enim procedit ex consideratione illa qua intelligitur exitus universi esse a Deo, sed ex illa consideratione qua ponitur aliquod agens incipere operari per motum: quod est particularis causae, et non universalis. Et propter hoc ex motu et immobilitate primi motoris, rationes suas sumi ad mundi aeternitatem ostendendum; unde diligenter consideranti, rationes eius apparent quasi rationes disputantes contra positionem. . . ."

As for Lambda itself, Mazzotta's reading is difficult to reconcile with the text. If all Aristotle is excluding from the Prime Mover is potency to be moved by another and not potentiality as such, presumably the Prime Mover would be in need of a further cause of this other sort of potency. Far from surreptitiously altering the meaning of what Aristotle says, Thomas is giving it the only reading consistent with the text and context. A Prime Mover from whom all potency had not been removed could scarcely be the simple substance Aristotle takes him to be. Surely, keeping in mind the implications Aristotle draws from the fact that the Prime Mover is pure act, most notably that he is Thinking Thinking Itself, Mazzotta's attempt to drive a wedge between Aristotle and his commentator seems more than strange. But not, alas, unusual.[8]

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It will be well to pursue the consequences of this interpretation as they are developed by Mazzotta because they are far from being peculiar to him, as he is at pains to point out. What will he make of Aristotle's remark that "on such a principle depend the heavens and nature" (1072b13–14)? Here too he speaks of "the hermeneutic novelty" (43) of Thomas's interpretation. Thomas takes the phrase to mean that the heaven and all of nature depend on the Prime Mover in their very substance. What does Mazzotta take Aristotle to mean? "In the Aristotelian context, the heaven and nature depend because of a sort of gravitational force that makes them tend toward the Prime Mover, the object of their desire and their love."[9] Thomas speaks of a dependence of the heaven *quantum ad perpetuitatem suae substantiae* as well as *quantum ad perpetuitatem sui motus* (2534). If this goes beyond Aristotle, we are left with only the perpetuity of its motion. But surely this would be to suggest that the motion of the first heaven is natural to it, following on its substance. And whence comes this nature? If its natural telos is the Prime Mover, its substance must depend on the Prime Mover. Mazzotta's "kind of

8. Of course, the phrase *substantia per se existens* is equivalent to *ipsum esse subsistens*, so if Thomas is reading Aristotle correctly here, as he is, the persistent effort to separate the two thinkers has to confront its own wrongheadedness. Mazzotta has to see the identification of the First Being and Pure Act as an exercise in a speculative reinterpretation of the history of philosophy (39). But that simply begs the question.

9. "Nel contesto aristotelico il cielo e la natura dipendono perché una sorta di forza gravitazionale li fa tendere verso il Primo Motore, oggetto del loro desiderio e del lore amore" (43).

gravitational force" suggests something extrinsic and incidental, something that just happens. Were he to develop his suggestion, he would find himself colliding with the whole *contesto aristotelico*. His is not an alternative reading of the text, but a failure to understand it. He expresses surprise that Thomas should explain what is said in the only way that makes sense of the text: "this is only because they have existence from him."[10] If that is not the intention of the text, such readings as Mazzotta's do not provide an alternative to it that makes Aristotelian sense.

Aristotle argues that the Prime Mover is alive with the highest form of life, thinking. God is his life. Here, according to Thomas, is how Aristotle proves this:

> He proves this thus: "the act of intellect," that is, understanding, is a certain life, and is the most perfect life there is. For act, as has been shown, is more perfect than potency. Hence the intellect in act lives more perfectly than intellect in potency, as one awake than one sleeping. But the First, namely, God, is act itself, for his intellect is his very understanding. Otherwise it would be compared to it as potency to act. But it was shown above that his substance is act. Hence it follows that the very substance of God is life, and his act is the best and sempiternal life, which is in itself subsistent.[11] (2544)

Mazzotta, who italicizes the final sentence of this passage, tells us that the argument of Thomas goes beyond what Aristotle says. This is clear to him because of the identification of God and life. "Aristotle and Thomas are not saying exactly the same thing. Between them is the same speculative distance as between the two following formulas: *Deo competit vita* and, on the other hand, *Deus est ipsa vita*" (49). It all comes down, he continues, to the "semantic and speculative increment of *actus*." "Act" in this passage means the act of understanding, an action, the activity of knowing. But when it is said that God is Pure Act, the term comes to signify perfection, "pure act, and not

10. "non est nisi quia ab eo habet esse" (*In VIII Physic.*, lectio 24, n. 1154 [Maggiolo edition]).

11. "Quod sic probat. 'Actus intellectus,' idest intelligere, vita quaedam est, et est perfectissimum quod est in vita. Nam actus, secundum quod ostensum est, perfectior est potentia. Unde intellectus in actu perfectius vivit quam intellectus in potentia, sicut vigilans quam dormiens. Sed illud primum, scilicet Deus, est ipse actus. Intellectus enim eius est ipsum suum intelligere. Alioquin comparetur ad ipsum ut potentia ad actum. Ostensum autem est supra quod eius substantia est actus. Unde relinquitur quod ipsa substantia Dei sit vita, et actus eius sit vita ipsius optima et sempiterna, quae est secundum se subsistens."

simply purely activity" (50). He allows that the richness of meaning of *energeia* permits Thomas to make what Mazzotta regards as a transition between the two senses. "But it is clear that the Thomistic hermeneutic does not simply repeat the Aristotelian assertion that God is act or activity, but goes beyond this to say that God is the act itself" (50).

There is no doubt that a tremendous advance toward understanding the divine nature is made here, but it is Aristotle who makes it. If the text meant what Mazzotta takes it to mean, there would be a composition in God of his nature and his intellect. εστι δε και το εν και το απλουν ου το αυτο (1072a32–33). Mazzotta should have been guided by this, as Thomas was, who then draws the analogy between the hierarchy of causes and the hierarchy of intelligible things. God is both Prime Mover and the Most Intelligible. It might have been to forestall such misreadings as Mazzotta's that Aristotle introduced the distinction between what is merely one and what is simple. Whether God is reached by way of motion or by way of thinking, he is seen to be simple and not composed. "Therefore it follows that the first intelligible is a simple substance which is act" (2523).[12]

3. *Noesis Noeseos*

Aristotle, after his astronomical discussion of separated substances other than the Prime Mover, returns to his discussion of the divine activity. God, he has concluded, is eternal and immutable and pure actuality. Thus he is venerable (1074b17), the best substance (1074b20), most honored and most divine (1074b26), best and most powerful (1074b33). This list of divine attributes, if it were all we could find in Aristotle, would elicit our wonder and admiration. But the best is yet to be. Aristotle now turns to a discussion of the act that characterizes God who is pure act, the act of thinking. What is the relation of God to his activity of thinking?

In order to advance the discussion, Aristotle must turn to the one kind of thinking that is accessible to us, our own. Only by recalling aspects of human intellectual activity will Aristotle be able to isolate that which in our own thinking is most perfect, and then describe the divine thinking as an eternal activity like that which is intermittently our own. And thus the discussion

12. "Relinquitur igitur, quod primum intelligibile sit substantia simplex, quae est actus."

begins with a discussion of the difficulties to be faced, and these are based on things familiar to us from our own case.

> For if it [the divine thought] thinks of nothing, what is there here of dignity? It is just like one who sleeps. And if it thinks, but this depends on something else, then (since that which is its substance is not the act of thinking, but a potency) it cannot be the best substance, for it is through thinking that its value belongs to it. (1074b17–21)

In commenting on this passage, Thomas writes:

> Therefore it should be known that intellect can be related to its own understanding in three ways. First, that it does not belong to it to understand in act, but only in potency or habit. Second, that it belongs to it in act. Third, that it should be its own understanding or intelligence, which is the same. (2601)[13]

Mazzotta finds here another instance of an *incremento hermeneutico*, saying that Thomas has expanded to three members a division that in Aristotle has only two. But surely the third member is to be found in the text of Aristotle, needing only to be spelled out by an attentive reader. Aristotle is recalling features of our thinking or knowing. We can say that Jones knows all about microbiology, pointing to the sleeping figure of Jones. When Jones is lecturing and in full flight, to say that he thinks or knows microbiology has a richer sense than the first. Jones is not likely to be substantially identified with his actual knowing, but the text of Aristotle presents that third possibility, if only to deny it of Jones. Jones's thinking depends on something else *ou gar esti touto ho estin autou he ousia noesis* (1074b19–20). Hermeneutical increment? In this context, not to notice what is entailed by extending to God what we can say of our own intellectual activities would be to abandon the task of the commentator. Mazzotta overlooks the sense of the text and wrongly accuses Thomas of slipping in some item of his "personal" thought.[14]

13. "Sciendum est ergo, quod intellectus ad suum intelligere potest se habere tripliciter. Uno modo quod non conveniat ei intelligere in actu, sed in potentia tantum, vel in habitu. Alio modo quod conveniat ei in actu. Alio modo quod sit ipsum suum intelligere, sive sua intelligentia, quod idem est."

14. Thomas DeKoninck, in a number of recent articles, has contributed to our understanding of this culminating achievement of Aristotle's natural theology. It is no part of his task, in these articles, to draw the implications, which will occur to the reader, for a correct appreciation of Thomas's commentary. See "Aristotle on God as Thought Thinking Itself," *Review of Metaphysics* 47, no. 3 (1994): 471–515; "Pensée de la Pensée," in *La question de Dieu selon Aristote et Hegel* Paris: (Paris: PUF, 1991), 69–151; "La noesis et l'indivisible selon Aristote," in *Actes*

What such scholars as Mazzotta seemingly do not want to see is the basis in Aristotle's text for doctrines that have long been associated with Thomas and have come to be thought of as what separates him from Aristotle. Since Thomas shows no such wariness of Aristotle, it becomes necessary to explain the saint's unaccountable ascription to Aristotle of teachings which, in received opinion, are peculiar to Thomas Aquinas. Mazzotta is right to see that Thomas's indication of where Aristotle is taking us, that is, to the realization that in God *sua substantia sit suum intelligere*, is hermeneutically equivalent to *ipsum intelligere subsistens* and that in turn makes it clear that *actus purus* as it has been developed by Aristotle is, as Thomas sees, *Ipsum esse subsistens*. In short, the long effort to make Aristotle and Thomas diverge is defeated by Thomas's own reading of Aristotle. Attempt after attempt has been made to explain this away. Guido Mazzotta's little book provided a convenient sampling of such attempts. Mazzotta is a good scholar and I have concentrated on him because his arguments are as strong as any I have found, and he provided a convenient summary of all too familiar "Thomistic" efforts to drive a wedge between Thomas and the text that Thomas, more surely than any other commentator on it, has enabled us to read for what it is. To suggest that, as commentator, he has some hidden agenda of his own simply has not been shown.

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du Congrès de Nice (1987), 215–28; and "Du nous d'Anaxagore a le noesis noeseos d'Aristote. Une innovation philosophique."

Thirteen ARISTOTELIAN EXISTENTIALISM AND THOMISTIC ESSENTIALISM

τὸ δ´ εἶναι οὐκ οὐδενὶ
Post. Analy., II, 7, 92b13–14

In this chapter I do not intend to defend what has been called the "Identity Thesis," that is, that Thomas *was* Aristotle, but I will continue to play the odd man out to the extent of urging that we should regain Thomas Aquinas's own enthusiastic regard for Aristotle and take more seriously Thomas's readings of the man he called the Philosopher.[1] When we do we will find many of the assertions made about the deep differences between Thomas and Aristotle difficult to defend. I am here chiefly concerned with the way in which such divisions of the house affect natural theology, and of course it is here that Thomas's grasp of *esse* enabled him to speak of *haec sublimis veritas*, namely, that *ipsum esse subsistens* is as close as we can get to a proper name for God. Aristotle, it has been thought, cut himself off from the possibility of such a realization by failing to recognize that in everything other than God there is a composition of essence and existence.

Since Etienne Gilson is the chief champion of the view that there is a chasm on this matter between Aristotle and Thomas, and since his stature as a Thomist is beyond question, I will take his statement of the difference as sufficient for my purposes here.

1. On the Identity Thesis, see Kevin Flannery, S.J., *Acts Amid Precepts: The Aristotelian Logical Structure of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Inquiry* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). "At a recent conference a speaker referred only half-jestingly to the 'McInerny Identity Thesis'—i.e., the idea, attributed to Ralph McInerny, that Thomas *was* Aristotle. McInerny has played the odd man out for a good number of years among 'traditional' Thomisits by defending a slightly less radical form of the thesis attributed to him" (xi).

What is being according to Thomas Aquinas? In a first sense, it is what Aristotle had said it was, namely, substance. For indeed it is true that being is substance, although it may also be true that being entails something more, over and above mere substantiality. In other words, it may be that Aristotle has left something out while describing being, but what he has seen there, is there. The presence, in Thomism, of an Aristotelian level on which being is conceived as identical with *ousia*, is beyond doubt, and, because Aristotle is in Thomas Aquinas, there always is for his readers a temptation to reduce him to Aristotle.[2]

If the claim were simply that there is more in Thomas than in Aristotle, it would be easy to accept, and, in part in least, Gilson seems to be saying only that. He is discussing the famous passage in Book IV of the *Metaphysics* in which Aristotle is establishing the mutual implications of being and one: whatever exists is one, whatever is one exists.[3] In drawing our attention to this passage, Gilson observes that just prior to it Aristotle has established that there is a science of being as being and of whatever belongs to it as being because there is a fundamental reality to which all the ways of being refer, and that is *ousia*. "The intention of Aristotle in this passage is therefore clear: Metaphysics shall deal with 'oneness' as it deals with 'being,' because oneness and being are simply two other names for reality *(ousia)* which both *is*, and is one in its own right. *If there is a doctrine of the identity of being and substance, this is one*, and Averroes was well founded in thinking that he was vindicating the authentic thought of Aristotle when he criticized Avicenna for teaching that existence was to the essence of reality, if not exactly an accident, at least a happening."[4] As Gilson reads the passage from Aristotle, "being" and "one" are two names for *ousia*, which is and is one. But *ousia* does not occur

2. E. Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), 158.

3. "If, now, being and unity are the same and are one thing in the sense that they are implied in one another as principle and cause are, not in the sense that they are explained by the same definition (though it makes no difference even if we suppose them to be like that—in fact this would even strengthen our case); for 'one man' and 'man' are the same thing, and so are 'existent man' and 'man,' and the doubling of the words in 'one man and one *existent* man' does not express anything different (it is clear that the two things are not separated either in coming to be or in ceasing to be); and similarly '*one* existent man' adds nothing to 'existent man,' so that it is obvious that the addition in these cases means the same thing, and unity is nothing apart from being; and if, further, the substance of each thing is one in no merely accidental way, and similarly is from its very nature something that *is*:—all this being so, there must be exactly as many species of being as of unity."

4. Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 159; emphasis added.

in the passage, which is intent to show that "man" and "being a man": ὤν ἀνθρωπος and "being one man" are, if not synonymous, point to the same thing. So there are three terms: man, being, one. Wherever you have a man, you have a being, wherever you have a being, you have one being. What does Gilson mean when he says that if there is a doctrine of the identity of being and substance, this is one? The passage certainly says that there is an identity of being a man and man, and also between being a man and being one man, but Gilson's suggested identity theory must mean more than that. The quarrel between Averroes and Avicenna may cast light on this. Averroes is applauded for being truer to the text when he criticized Avicenna for "teaching that existence was to the essence of reality, if not exactly an accident, at least a happening."[5] This seems less a remark about how Avicenna understood existence as an accident than praise of Averroes for seeing the irrelevance of existence for Aristotle.

"The point of view of substance" is distinguished from "the point of view of existence." The first point of view, allegedly that of Aristotle, identifies essence *(ousia)* and existence, the second viewpoint holds that there is a real distinction between them. Despite this dramatic contrast, we are asked to see this "Aristotelian" substance as remaining as a component of the second viewpoint. That is why Thomas does not apply his distinction of essence and existence in discussing this text of Aristotle.[6]

It is what Aristotle is thought to have said that interests us here. If indeed Aristotle had identified existing and the nature or essence of a thing, that is, if he held that it is of the very essence of a substance to exist, certain rather dramatic consequences for his view of the cosmos would follow. A substance whose essence it is to exist could not be a physical or natural thing, since they come to be and eventually cease to be. "Because the acme of reality is substance and, in substance itself, essence, Aristotelian being is one with its own necessity. Such as its philosopher has conceived it, *it cannot possibly not exist*."[7]

5. Ibid.

6. "But this was not the occasion for him to apply the distinction of essence and existence, because, if in a being, its 'to be' is other than its 'essence,' the very thing which arises from the composition of its 'to be' with its essence is in no way distinct from its intrinsic oneness or from its being. In other words, the Aristotelian substance remains intact in the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas" (Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 160).

7. Ibid.

This interpretation of Aristotle can only be seen as the *reductio ad absurdum* of the effort to open a chasm between Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. If Aristotle identified essence and existence, natural substances would exist necessarily; but natural substances are the very paradigm of contingent being; therefore . . . ? The minimum conclusion is that, if to be contingent involves a distinction between essence and existence, then it looks as if Aristotle held this, however implicitly.

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But there is no need to regard Aristotle's recognition of the distinction of essence and existence as merely implicit. It is thematic in a number of works. "For it is not the same thing not to be something and not to be without qualification."[8] And, in the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle enumerates the four objectives of inquiry. "The things we seek are equal in number to those we understand. We seek four things: the fact, the reason why, if it is, what it is."[9] When we know that something is a fact, for example, that the Sun is eclipsed, by the testimony of our senses, we can go on to ask why it is so. But there is another set of questions, "e.g. if a centaur or a god is or is not (I mean if one is or not *simpliciter* and not if it is white or not). And knowing that it is, we seek what it is (e.g. What is a god? What is a man?)."[10] Whether or not a thing is, the *an sit*, must be determined before we ask of the existent thing what it is. That the answer to that second question provides knowledge of the kind of existence a thing has could scarcely be said to provide us knowledge of its existence *tout court*. That is presupposed. Of course the answer to the question "Is it?" presupposes some description or other of "it." It is not as if there were first undifferentiated existence and then tying it down to an existent thing of a certain kind. To be is to be something or other.[11]

Now as it happens, St. Thomas commented on this work of Aristotle and, in explaining Book II, he has things of great importance to say about the possibility of demonstrating essence. Thomas distinguishes three arguments against this possibility in the text. Here is the first.

8. *Sophistical Refutations*, 167a2.

9. II, 1, 89a23–24.

10. Ibid., 32–35. See Maquart, *Revue thomiste*.

11. It has sometimes been suggested that *esse simpliciter* is distinct from *esse substantialiter* and *esse secundum quid* and that this unspecified existence is what is unique to Thomas Aquinas. See my *Boethius and Aquinas*, 183.

The aim of the definition is to manifest something one, the parts of the definition constituting something that is essentially and not incidentally one. The aim of the demonstration, in which the definition plays the role of middle term, is also to demonstrate one thing, and its conclusion must be proportionate to the middle term. Thus one cannot demonstrate the two things by means of a single demonstration.[12] And what are the two things that cannot be thus demonstrated? τὸ δέ τἰ ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος καἰ τὸ εἶναι ἄνθρωπον ἄλλο (92b10–11) "But what a man is and that a man is are different." What does Thomas have to say of that?

> But what a man is and to be a man differ, for only in the First Principle, who is essentially being, is existence and quiddity one and the same: in all other things, which are being by participation, to be and the quiddity of the being must differ. That is why it is not possible for someone to demonstrate by the same demonstration what is and that it is.[13]

Existential Thomists are constantly being confronted with such texts and have devised ways of fending off their implications. If they are right about the difference between Aristotle and Thomas, Thomas is not here simply telling us what the text says; rather he is importing things that are (1) not in Aristotle and even (2) at odds with Aristotle. But none of these time-honored defenses that received opinion has generated can do away with the straightforwardness of Thomas's remarks. Clearly he thinks, as doubtless anyone not in the grips of a theory would, that Aristotle is saying that you cannot simultaneously prove the definition and what the definition as middle term is meant to establish because these are two different things. What a man is and that a man is are different.

That Thomas is simply reading Aristotle is clear when we go on to the second argument. "Next we say it is necessary that everything that a thing is

12. "Sicut definitio inducitur ad manifestationem aliquid unum, in quantum scilicet ex partibus definitionis fit unum per se et non per accidens, ita etiam oportet quod demonstratio, quae utitur definitione tanquam medio, unum aliquid demonstraret: oportet enim conclusionem esse medio proportionatum. Et ita patet quod per unam et eamdem demonstrationem non possunt diversas demonstrari" (*In II Post. Analyticorum*, lectio 6, n. 3).

13. "Sed aliud est *quod quid est homo*, et *esse hominem*: in solo enim primo essendi Principio, quod est essentialiter ens, ipsum *esse* et *quidditas* eius est unum et idem: in omnibus autem aliis, quae sunt entia per participationem, oportet quod sit aliud *esse* et *quidditas* entis. Non est ergo possibile quod eadem demonstratione demonstret aliquid *quid est* et *quia est*" (*In II Post. Analyticorum*, lectio 6, n. 3).

should be proved through demonstration, unless it is its substance. But being is not the substance of anything: for what is is not a genus" (92b12–15). No more fundamental Aristotelian doctrine than that being is not a genus can be imagined, and that is the key to what is being said.

> According to the common view of the wise, it is necessary that the all, the whole, that is established through demonstration, be that something is the case, unless one should perhaps say that to be is the substance of some thing. But that is impossible. Existence is not the substance or essence of any thing existing in a genus, because the genus is predicated of it as what it is. But being is not a genus, as is proved in *Metaphysics* III. So it is that God, who is his existence, is not in a genus.[14]

What is being said here of the difference between essence and existence is linked with the recognition that being is not a genus. Thomas refers us to the *Metaphysics* for a discussion of the matter.

That being is not a genus is a truth that often comes up in the *Metaphysics* but the *ex professo* treatment of it is doubtless that found in Book III, the book of problems or aporiai, when it is asked whether the genera that are said of many things are the principles and elements constitutive of those things.

St. Thomas on *III Metaphysics* 3 (lectio 8)

Divisio Textus

> Thomas identifies this chapter as the first in a sequence that will be asking about principles. Chapter 3 asks if universals are principles and Chapter 4 (lectio 9) asks if there are principles separated from matter. The discussion continues in the following chapter when the identification of the principles *(qualia sunt)* is taken up. Because of its aporetic character, discussions in Book 3 entertain opposed solutions to the problems raised. For all that, as in the denial that being is a genus, the argument is taken to be sound and fundamental to Aristotle's rejection of Platonism.

14. "Secundum commune sapientum dictum, necessarium quod *omne*, idest totum, quod per demonstrationem demonstratur, sit ipsum *quia est*, nisi forte aliquid dicat quod hoc ipsum *quia est* sit substantia alicuius rei. Hoc autem est impossible. Hoc enim ipsum quod est *esse*, non est substantia vel essentia alicuius rei in genere existentis. Alioquin oporteret quod hoc quod dico *ens* esset genus, quia genus est quod praedicatur de aliquo in eo quod quid. Ens autem non est genus, ut probatur in III Metaphy. Et propter hoc etiam Deus, qui est suum esse, non est in genere" (*In II Post. Analyticorum*, lectio 6, n. 4).

1. Are the genera principles (998a20–999a23: nn. 423–42)?
   a) The question posed (998a20–23: n. 423).
   b) The question disputed (998a21ff.: nn. 424–30).
      i. What things first come to be from are elements and principles. Three arguments (998a21–b4: nn. 424–26).
      ii. Three counterarguments (998b4–11: nn. 427–29).
      iii. Possible reply rejected (998b11–14: n. 430).

2. Which genera are principles, the first or others (998b14ff.: nn. 431–42)?
   a) The question posed (998b14–17: n. 431).
   b) The problem disputed.
      i. Three reasons showing first genera can't be principles (998b17–999a1: nn. 432–35)
      ii. Three reasons that species rather than genera ought to be principles (999a1–16: nn. 436–40)
      iii. He opposes the proposal (999a16–22: nn. 441–42)

For our purposes, it is division 2bi that is the heart of the matter, since it is here that we find the argument that neither being nor one can be a genus. It is, as can be seen, the first of three arguments against the proposal that the ultimate genera are principles. Here is the argument:

If genera are principles because they are universal, then those universals that are predicated of everything ought to be the highest principles and there will be as many principles as there are most common or universal genera,

But being and one are most universal since they are predicated of everything.

Therefore one and being are the principles and substance of things.

But this is impossible since neither being nor one can be the genus of everything. Why? If one and being are most universal and the principles of things, it would follow that the principles are not genera. Thus the argument that the most common genera are principles is impossible since it entails the opposite of what is advanced, namely, that the principles are not genera.

That refutation rests on the assumption that being and one are not genera, and this in turn must be proved.

Since it is by adding a difference to the genus that the species is constituted, neither the species without the genus can be predicated of the difference, nor the genus without the species.

Not the first, for two reasons:

The difference is in more than is the genus, as Porphyry shows.

Second, since the difference is placed in the definition of the species, the species cannot be predicated *per se* of the difference, unless the difference is taken as the subject of the species, as number is the subject of equal, in whose definition it enters. But that isn't the way it is. Rather, the difference is a kind of form of the species.

Therefore, the species cannot be predicated of the difference, save perhaps accidentally or incidentally.

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No more can the genus as such *(sumptum per se)* be predicated *per se* of the difference. The genus is not put into the definition of the difference. Because the difference does not participate in the genus, as was shown in *Topics* IV. Nor is the difference put into the definition of the genus; so there is no way the genus can be predicated of the difference. It can of course be predicated of that "which has the difference," that is, of the species, which actually has the difference. That is why it is said that the species is not predicated of the proper differences of the genus, nor the genus without the species, because the genus is predicated of the differences as they are in the species. But there is no difference of which being and one are not predicated, since any difference of any genus is both being and one, otherwise it could not constitute some one species of being. So it is impossible that either being or one be a genus.

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If we turn now to Thomas's comments on the text of the *Metaphysics* discussed earlier by Gilson, we find accounts of what "being" and "one" mean. "Man," "existent man," and "one man" all refer to the same thing, but in different ways, having different accounts or *rationes*. To make the comparison general all around, Thomas substitutes "thing" *(res),* so we are now comparing "thing," "existing thing," and "one thing." If the three are said to mean the same thing, "mean" here would mean "refer to." If they had the same meanings or accounts *(rationes),* they would be synonyms and then it would be idle *(sic nugatio esset)* to ask for the difference between calling something a being and saying it is one.

Note that the word 'man' is imposed from the quiddity or nature of man, and the word 'thing' from unspecified quiddity, whereas the word 'being' is imposed from

the act of existing, and the word 'one' from order or indivision. For what is one is undivided being. It is the same thing that has the essence and a quiddity thanks to the essence and which is undivided in itself. Hence these three terms, 'thing,' 'being,' and 'one,' signify something in every way identical, but according to different meanings. (*In IV Metaphysic.*, lectio 2, n. 553)[15]

The point of this passage in the *Metaphysics* is to establish that the science of being as being is also the science of being as one, and just as it considers the various modes of being, so too it must consider the various modes of unity. These go hand in hand, because what exists is one and what is one exists. Gilson feels that Thomas is holding himself back in his commentary, restraining himself from expatiating on the difference between essence and existence. But of course that distinction is crucial to the meanings he assigns to 'thing' and 'being.' Metaphysics seeks to give an account of the things that are, things that actually exist: Aristotle is careful to point out the various meanings of 'being' that are not in play—accidental being, being in the sense of true. 'Being as being' may not seem a very restrictive subject matter, but it does exclude such beings as just mentioned. It includes what exists *per se*, as such, but as the text has just pointed out, 'being' is said in many ways. That is, there are many modes or manners of actually existing, and the primary mode is substance, focus on which provides such unity as this science has. So beings *(entia)* are existing things, and the metaphysician hopes to give an account of them. He will do this by clarifying the modes of existing, first and chiefly, existing substantially. As we have already seen, his ultimate aim is to arrive at such knowledge as he can of separate or immaterial substances, divine things, of God. This entails a new look at the things already studied in natural philosophy, seeing them "as beings." Of course, this does not mean just taking a predicably more general look at them in order to create an abstract vocabulary. What the metaphysician is after is clues in material substance as to what separate substances are like.

Why did Thomas bring in Avicenna in commenting on the passage? Be-

15. "Sciendum est enim quod hoc nomen Homo imponitur a quidditate, sive a natura hominis, et hoc nomen Res imponitur a quidditate tantum; hoc vero nomen Ens imponitur ab actu essendi: et hoc nomen Unum ab ordine vel indivisione. Est enim unum ens indivisum. Idem autem est quod habet essentiam et quidditatem per illam essentiam, et quod est in se indivisum. Unde ista tria, res, ens, unum, significant omnino idem, sed secundum diversas rationes."

cause Avicenna denied that 'being' and 'one' signify the same substance; his view is that both these terms signify something added to substance. His motive in the case of 'being' was this: "And he said this of 'being' because in any thing that has existence from another, the existence of that thing differs from its substance or essence, and the term 'being' signifies that very existence. Thus it seems to signify something added to essence" (n. 556).[16]

Thomas makes short shrift of this. The existence of a caused thing is other than its essence but it shouldn't be understood as something superadded in the manner of an accident; rather it is as it were constituted by the principles of the essence. That is why the term 'being' which is imposed from existence signifies the same thing as the term which is imposed from essence, such a term as 'man.'[17] If we asked Thomas for the *ratio entis*, he would say, *habens esse* or *id quod habet esse* and we see immediately why he says that 'being' or *ens* has an account that is drawn from the fact that it exists. Of course 'being' is not equivalent to 'exists,' but imagine that it were: where would an inquiry into 'exists' lead us? To the things that enjoy existence. That is the message of the *ratio entis*. The way to knowledge of the things that are, actually existing things, in the first instance, the changeable substances of our sense experience, is by acquiring clarity about the different modes of existing. Those modes are read from the natures or essences of the things that exist. We should particularly notice the phrase that Thomas uses in dismissing Avicenna's mistaken understanding of the distinction between essence and existence. Existence, Thomas says, *quasi constituitur per principia essentiae*. This phrase often occurs in this connection; perhaps it has not been given the attention it deserves. What it minimally protects us from is the suggestion that there is a kind of metaphysical crossroads at which Aristotle took the road to essence and Thomas the road to existence. There is only one road, the one both men are on.

16. "Et de ente quidem hoc dicebat, quia in qualibet re quae habet esse ab alio, aliud est esse rei, et substantia sive essentia eius: hoc autem nomen ens, significat ipsum esse. Significat igitur (ut videtur) aliquid additum essentiae."

17. "Esse enim rei quamvis sit aliud ab eius essentia, non tamen est intelligendum quod sit aliquod superadditum ad modum accidentis, sed quasi constituitur per principia essentiae. Et ideo hoc nomen Ens quod imponitur ab ipso esse, signifcat idem cum nomine quod imponitur ab ipsa essentia" (Ibid., n. 558).

I suggested earlier that the claim that Aristotle identified essence and existence in speaking of the things around falls of its own weight since it leads to saying that changeable, contingent substances are changeless and necessary. David Twetten has recently developed a not dissimilar *reductio ad absurdum* of the supposed Aristotelian identification of essence and existence.[18]

Relying on the listing and classification of all the various arguments for the real composition of essence and *esse* in every being other than God, Twetten suggests that their common flaw is a *petitio principii*, and he illustrates that by recalling how St. Thomas handled the argument of St. Anselm for the existence of God. "Non inconveniens est quolibet dato vel in re vel in intellectu aliquid maius cogitari posse, nisi ei qui concedit esse aliquid quo maius cogitari non possit in rerum natura." In short, the proof assumes what it would prove. Similarly, Twetten finds that in the various arguments Thomas begins with the assumption that esse is other than essence. What to do? His suggestion is the intriguing one that a *reductio ad absurdum* can be fashioned of any effort to account for the existence of a composition thing by appeal to form alone, matter alone, or matter and form together.

This is intriguing not least because it seems in keeping with Thomas's position in his commentary on Boethius's *De hebdomadibus* that the axiom *diversum est esse et id quod est* is just that, an axiom, and indeed *per se notum quoad omnes*. If that is so, the only recourse one has when confronted with the claim that essence alone explains existence is by reducing it to absurdity. And that is what he proceeds to do.[19] Say this *reductio* works, as I think it

18. "Come distinguere realmente tra esse ed essenza in Tommaso d'Aquino: Qualche aiuto da Aristotele," in *Tommaso D'Aquino e l'oggetto della Metafisica*, ed. Stephen L. Brock (Rome: Armando, 2004). The author has kindly supplied me with the English version of his article, "On Really Distinguishing Essence from Esse in Aquinas: Some Help from Aristotle."

19. Here is his argument:

(1) If Aristotle does not need really distinct "actually *to be*," then form and matter alone "account for actually *to be*" (assuming that "actually *to be*" does not merely name an extrinsic relation).

(2) But, first, matter alone as matter cannot account for "actually *to be*."

(2.1) For, matter alone is pure potency, but what is in potency as such is not yet.

(2.2) Also, matter alone does not explain why things come to be, since pure potency, which is not yet, cannot as such act.

(2.3) Also, we do not say that matter alone is, but that the composite is; if matter alone in the genus of substance were to be, then all form would be accidental.

(3) Second, form alone as form cannot account for "actually to be."

(3.1) For, although form is actuality, form as form in material things "is not."

does. What are the implications for the reiterated claim that the metaphysics of St. Thomas is radically different from the metaphysics of Aristotle?

There have been those who sought to make this claim by holding that the subject matter of metaphysics changes from Aristotle to Thomas because of the prominence in the latter of talk about essence and existence and the supposed absence of this recognition in Aristotle. That effort seems to have been abandoned, certainly by the great champions of existential Thomism such as Etienne Gilson and Cornelio Fabro. Why? Because both of them ended by maintaining that the real distinction can be established only after one has shown that in God essence and existence are identical, that he is *Ipsum esse subsistens*.[20] But that discussion takes place in an ongoing discourse and thus

(3.1.1) For, otherwise, the form of material things would not need matter in order to be.

(3.1.2) Also, just as for Aristotle form does not come to be, but only the composite, so form as such in material things does not have "actually to be," but only the composite.

(3.2) Also, form alone does not explain why things come to be. Otherwise, material substances would not need separate moving causes.

(3.3) Also, even if the cause of coming to be were nothing but the cause of form's being actualized in matter, the source of continuing to be cannot be form alone.

(3.3.1) For, otherwise, the form of material things would never be destroyed, as in the case of "separate form," but would continue to be after the destruction of the composite.

(4) Third, form and matter together cannot alone account for "actually *to be*."

(4.1) For, either form and matter account for it insofar as each as such "actually is," *contra* Steps (2.1), (2.3), and (3.1).

(4.2) Or, they account for "actually *to be*" by form's actualizing matter, making one substance. But if so, form alone as form accounts for "actually *to be*," contrary to Step (3).

(4.2.1) For only what is actual as such can account for "actually *to be*."

(4.2.2.1) But the only actuality by which matter as in potency is actualized by form as act is the act of form.

(4.2.2.2) Also, there is no real distinction between form and "matter just insofar as it is actualized"; for since nothing can be both potency and act in the same respect, matter just as actualized is solely in act. Consequently, the only actuality in the actuality of matter by form is the actuality of form.

(5) Therefore, form and matter alone do not account for actual "actually *to be*."

(6) But since "actually *to be*" must be accounted for, there must be some component that accounts for it that is really distinct from form and matter.

20. We saw in an earlier chapter that this is Gilson's conviction in his final book on the subject. But he had already maintained it in *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1960), 128–30. Twetten sees a whole set of proofs for the real distinction as involv-

would seem to be at the end of metaphysics *(via ascensus),* and that surely suggests that the science and its subject matter have been established. Obviously, if the real distinction in composite things presupposes having shown that God is *Ipsum esse subsistens*, then the subject matter of the science would not be dependent on the real distinction. All this leads me to make the following irenic proposal.

Let's reestablish Aristotelico-Thomism as the norm. Let us proceed, as Thomas does, on the assumption that Aristotle has adequately set forth the subject matter of metaphysics once and for all. Of course, if it were true that Aristotle *identified* essence and existence, his views on substance would be incompatible with Thomas and with the truth of the matter. But the consequences of making such an assumption about Aristotle render the interpretation untenable. One cannot say that for Aristotle natural substance necessarily exists, that its essence is its existence, *and* that such a conception of the natural substance is taken over by Thomas Aquinas. Aristotle simply was not an essentialist if that is what the term means.[21] If there is but the one metaphysics with its specific subject matter for both Aristotle and Thomas, we then have the discipline to which St. Thomas, in his commentary and elsewhere, made such remarkable contributions. That he incorporated Neoplatonist doctrines into that same metaphysics is another way in which the discipline grew in his hands. It is a very different thing to say that we have much more with Thomas Aquinas and quite another to suggest that that "more" is not a development of the science of being as being established by Aristotle.

ing what he calls the God to Creatures argument; see *Art. Cit.*, 162–66. Joseph Owens is also a proponent of this way of establishing the real distinction. For Fabro, see *Participation et causalité*, 75–81, and "Notes pour la fondation métaphysique de l'être," in *Tomismo e pensiero moderno*, 291–317. This is as well, it seems to me, the position of Battista Mondin in *La metafisica di S. Tommaso d'Aquino e i suoi interpreti* (Rome, 2003).

21. Enrico Berti has this to say: "Pour Aristote, en définitive, il n'existe pas un acte d'être, pur et simple, réelement distinct du fait d'être une chose déterminée, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'y a pas de distinction réelle entre essence et être, et en cela sa pensée diverge nettement de celle de saint Thomas. Cependant cela ne signifie pas qu'il réduit l'être à l'essence, c'est-à-dire que c'est un 'essentialiste,' comme cela a été soutenu by certain spécialistes [Gilson, Owens, Fabro], car la même facon qu'il n'est pas possible de penser un être qui ne soit l'être d'une essence déterminée, pour Aristote il n'est pas possible de penser une essence qui n'exprime aussi une facon déterminée d'être, c'est-à-dire un *actus essendi*." ("Le problème de la substantialité de l'être et de l'un dans la *Métaphysique*," in *Etudes sur la Méetaphysique d'Aristote. Actes du VI Symposium Aristotelicum*, ed. Pierre Aubenque (Paris: Vrin, 1979), 100).

And, given the telos of metaphysics, that is, such knowledge as we can attain of God from things more knowable by us, we are better able to see the continuity of the theology of the *Metaphysics* and Thomas's development of what he called the *praeambula fidei*. The Renaissance Aristotelian Antonio Cittadini once wrote that *Thomam aufer, mutus fiet Aristoteles*.[22] The reverse is also true. *Aristotelem aufer, mutus fiet Thoma*: apart from Aristotle, Thomas cannot speak to us.

22. "Un aristotelico del Rinascimento, Antonio Cittadini, corrispondente del Pico, soleva dire: *Thomam aufer, mutus fiet Aristoteles:* mandata via Tommaso, Aristotele si fa muto."—Joseph Moreau, "La tradizione aristotelica e l'analogia entis," in *Metafore dell'invisible, Richerche sull'analogia* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1984).

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